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OR,
Deputy Detective Ticket's Trump.

The Lost Tin Box Mystery.

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AUTHOR OF "BROADWAY BILLY" NOVELS, ETC.

CHAPTER I.

A CASE WITHOUT A CLUE.

THE rising young detective, William Weston, chanced to be alone in his office when a gentleman entered.

The visitor was about thirty years of age—

BILLY STEPPED QUICKLY FORWARD AND CAUGHT THE PAPER OUT OF HER HAND.

certainly not any more, and was rather good-looking than otherwise, with a frank and open countenance.

"Do I address Broadway Billy, the detective?" he inquired.

"That is what I am called," was the prompt and pleasant answer.

"Glad I have found you in and disengaged, sir. I want your assistance."

"Very well, sit down and let me hear what you have to say. If I can help you I will."

The caller drew a chair up close and sat down, taking off his hat and leaning forward with an earnest manner.

"A month ago, sir," he spoke confidently, "I was a poor man; to-day I am worth a clean hundred thousand, but am poorer than I was then."

Billy had already studied the man closely, with favorable result. He liked his looks, and though what he said was puzzling there was nothing to indicate madness.

"I fail to catch on," Billy said. "You are speaking in something of a riddle, I take it. You will have to make it plain, Mr.—"

"My name is Norman Sherwin. Yes, it is a riddle, but I won't pester you with it for I have a greater one for you to tackle—following your example to speak slangy. A month ago I had a position at a fair salary, but I fell heir to a hundred thousand dollars and threw it up. The hundred thousand, however, has failed to materialize, so now I am afoot entirely."

"That is plainer, still not plain enough. Have you been robbed?"

"I don't know whether it is robbery or not, Mr. Weston. It is a strange matter, looking at it all around. But, I'll give you the facts at once."

"Yes, let me have them."

"Well, my aunt, Patience Penrose, spinster, died a month ago and left me a hundred thousand dollars in cash. She was very rich and very eccentric. She had this money hid somewhere in the house, and only her lawyer knew the secret of where it was. As it happened, he died suddenly on the same day."

"And so it's a dead secret?"

"Yes."

"And you want me to help you find the money?"

"That is what I came here for, sir. Do you think there is any hope that it ever can be found?"

"How can I say as to that? Just give me the particulars, if you please, and then we'll decide what is the true course of action."

"All right, here goes: This lawyer's name was Joseph Doorman. He and my aunt were lovers long years ago, but for some reason they never married, though I guess they remained lovers to the end. Her will was found in his office, but not a sign of a clue to show where the cash was secreted or kept."

"Did the will give any hint that this money was really in the house?"

"Yes, it referred to one hundred thousand dollars in money, concealed in the house, and stated plainly that Joseph Doorman held the secret, which he would reveal to me."

"That was all? No reference to the kind of money it was? or what it was in?"

"Yes, now that you remind me, it was in a tin box."

"It begins to assume shape, then. That sum of money, in large bills, might be crowded into a very small box. At any rate it's probably nothing bigger than an ordinary cash box."

"You are right, you are right. If the bills were C's there would be only a thousand of them, while if M's there would be but a hundred. It is just as likely as not there are just an even hundred, of a thousand each, for she was eccentric; and, too, she'd be as likely to leave it all in pennies, if the notion came to her."

"The last would have puzzled her, I fancy."

"Very likely it would."

"Are you the only heir?"

"No, the woods are full of 'em; but, I and Miss Merrett are the only ones who received anything of importance."

"Are the others disposed to fight?"

"They can't; she and I are the nearest, and they each received something, if only enough to stand law. The old lady was as keen as she was queer."

"And who is this Miss Merrett?"

"My cousin; her mother and mine were twins, younger sisters of aunt Patience, and we are the only ones she seemed to care anything about."

"What share did Miss Merrett receive?"

"A lot of diamonds and stuff, and the house and everything in it. She has nothing to complain of, unless it was the incidental clause in the will; she might kick at that."

"What was the clause?"

"Nothing worth mentioning, scarcely; our aunt simply expressed the hope that we would marry."

"How does that proposition strike you?"

"Not at all. I have interests elsewhere, to be plain about it."

"And you don't know how *she* stands in that respect, whether *she* would be willing or not?"

"No, I do not know."

"You have no suspicion against any one, have you? That is, do you suspect that the money has been found?"

"Have no reason to think it has, Mr. Weston. I have made a thorough search of the house, aided by Miss Merrett and others, but it could not be found anywhere."

"How about servants?"

"The old woman had only one, an old dame nearly as old as herself."

"She is still there?"

"Yes; it was in the will that she was to have a home there all her days. I hardly think she is enjoying herself, however."

"How is that?"

"Why, Ermina has made quite a change in things since she took the reins."

"That is Miss Merrett?"

"Yes; that is her name. She has opened the whole house—it was always kept shut up and dark, and has engaged several servants and begun to live in something of style."

"Where do her means come from?"

"She has the old lady's income, and it is quite large, I imagine."

"Don't you know whether it is large or small?"

"No; I only guess at it; the old lady was very wealthy, worth more than the hundred thousand, I'd imagine."

"Why, that will couldn't have been the clearest in the world."

"On that point it wasn't. That was the wind-up of it; everything else, it said, to go to Ermina Merrett, including bank-book and personal income."

"Well, it won't be much trouble to find out about these small particulars. What you are interested in is to get hold of your tin box with the hundred thousand it contains."

"You are right. Now, do you think there is any hope?"

"A question or two more first. Were you on good terms with your aunt?"

"On the best of terms, the same as Ermina."

"No reason then why she should play a joke on you, willing you a box of money when there was nothing of the kind?"

"Oh, no; the thing is real enough, or it was when she made the will."

"When was the will dated?"

"A year ago."

"Taking your view of it, then, I think there is hope of finding it. You have an undoubted right to search that house to find

your own, and a close search may show us a clue."

"You think so?"

"I say it *may* be so."

"Well, I'll tell you what I was going to propose: I have searched until I am satisfied that I cannot find it, and if you can find it you shall have ten per cent. of whatever the box contains."

"Oh, no; I want only my fee for my service."

"And you have to be paid anyhow, whether you succeed or not, of course."

"That is only business, Mr. Sherwin."

"Then I might as well throw up the sponge at once," and the young man leaned back in his chair with a sigh.

"You have no means?"

"I told you to begin with that I am poorer now than I was before I came into this fortune. I thought maybe you would take up the business for me on chance; that is, a percentage of the money if you find it."

"And nothing if I don't."

"Well, you see how I am fixed. That is my only hope, Mr. Weston."

"You have awakened my interest in the case, Mr. Sherwin, and I'll take it up for you and do what I can; but—"

"Good! If you do that I am sure of winning, for I have heard something about your ability. You win, and there is ten thousand dollars for you, if the box—"

"No; hear me out, please. I was going to say, if I win you can pay me my fee; if I score a failure we'll make no account of it."

"I won't have it that way at all, sir; you are going to do me a big favor, and if you succeed you shall take your share."

"We'll talk about that when the work is done, then."

"No, I want you to promise now that you'll take what I am willing to give. I will be out nothing, don't you see, since it is something I have never had yet; besides, I want you to have something in view to make you do your prettiest—"

"There, there, Mr. Sherwin, you mistake your man now. I do my level best on every case I undertake, whether there is a reward in view or not."

"Well, pardon me, then. But, you'll take the case?"

"Yes, I'll take it, and will go at it just as soon as I get something else off my hands. But, I must question further."

"Fire away."

"This Mr. Doorman, was *he* strictly honest?"

"Have no reason to think otherwise; I think he would serve my aunt in good faith, anyhow."

"Had no family, had he?"

"No; like my aunt, he never married. I don't think it worth your while to waste any suspicion in his direction, sir. It seems to me like a plain case of a dead secret, nothing more."

"Then we must direct our efforts toward bringing it to life again; that is, if our search comes to nothing; we'll try that first of all. I'll let you know when I am ready. Now, let me have the address of this house, the lawyer's office, and so forth, and I'll make note of the whole matter."

CHAPTER II.

THE COMBINATION IN MOTION.

"JUPETY JUPE! If this ain't a case fer Broadway Billy then I miss it. Maybe I'll be their Ticket fer Sing Sing, if they don't watch out sharp."

The speaker was the street Arab, Ticket. He was standing with his bootblack's box slung over his shoulder and his hands thrust deep into the pockets of his ragged trowsers, looking askance at two men, for one of whom he had just performed the humble duty of his calling.

It was Broadway Billy over again, only this lad was younger than Billy Weston when

he first came under our notice, and he was smaller; but, he had the same clear eyes and determined face, and the same strong limbs and sturdy figure. The likeness was striking. Ticket, however, was even more a child of the gutters than Broadway Billy had been, for he had neither home nor name.

The two men were not very inviting in appearance, though one was rather smartly dressed. This was the one whom Ticket had given a shine. The other was more poorly clad, and had a sullen, hangdog face. They were leaning against a high board fence that had been erected around the front and side of a building in the process of going up, and while Ticket had been at work upon the boots of the genteel crook, as he well knew that one to be, he had heard something of what they were talking about.

He had not been able to hear much, however: certainly not enough to satisfy him. The rough-looking fellow had given a word of caution, after a remark or two, and they had promptly changed the subject until Ticket was done with his work.

"By Jupe!" the lad quickly decided. "I'll do it. I want to keep my grip on Broadway Billy's 'fection, and I'll hear more of what they have got to say or I'll bust a tryin'."

His decision made, he pulled his cap tight down on his head and set off at a brisk pace around the corner.

He had not far to go when he came to a hole in the fence, and it was but the work of a moment for him to creep through, and in a minute or less he was standing with an ear to a crack where the men then stood, conversing.

"Yer can't mean it!" he heard the rough fellow exclaim, the first words he caught.

"I do though; the thing is just as I tell you," the other assured.

Ticket knew this fellow, slightly. His name was Tony Vangriff, and he was, as mentioned, something of a genteel crook.

"But not a hundred thousing? It don't seem possible, Tony."

"That is the amount, Hugh."

"But not all in clean, cold cash? It *can't* be. Why, sech a puddin' as that would set us up fer life."

"That it would, Hugh Higgin. Yes, it's all in money; not a single bond or paper of any kind to dispose of; the fattest pudding you ever heard of outside of a bank."

"Banks ain't in et with sech a snap, if it's jest as you say; but, tell me all about it, Tony; I can't seem ter git my grip on it yet."

"Why, that is all there is to tell; you have the whole thing in a nutshell."

"And how did you git onto it?"

"A girl of mine has got a place there, and she put me onto it! Oh! it is all straight, Hugh. We have only to find that tin box and we are set up for life, as you say."

"I can't believe et, Tony; it's too good ter be so. Any woman would be a fool to keep sech a sum o' good green in the house. 'Sides, if it's hid away as you say, how are we goin' to git our paws onto it?"

"We've got to find it, that's the only way. It won't be the first difficult job we have done, will it? Then what's the matter with you? That old woman knew what she was doing; she wasn't trusting her fortune in the hands of bank cashiers if she knew it."

"But, do you really believe it?"

"Why, yes, to be sure; it was in the old dame's will, and the heirs have been trying to find it. It's there, somewhere, as sure as you are a hard case."

"Then et's a sure deal, an' that's the fact. But, I don't see how we are to git at it, hang me if I do. If they have hunted fer it by daylight, with nothin' to fear, how kin we expect ter find it by night prowlin'?"

"Isn't it worth trying?"

"Oh! sure et is; but it ain't over-promisin'."

"All right; I'll see Kate again and get the lay of the land down fine, and then I'll meet you and talk it over."

"The sooner the better, fer I am walkin' on my uppers now."

"I'll see you to-night, at Mike's; you be there at nine and I will drop in on you."

"All right; but you want ter keep it close. That's the reason I choked you off when that kid was blackin' yer boots."

"That was right; I didn't take any thought of him. Well, then, to-night at nine, at Mike's. Don't you fail to be there, and you want to be straight, too."

They separated, and Ticket withdrew from the crack at which he had been listening.

"Jupety Jupe!" he cried, slapping his leg smartly, "but I was *sure* of it! I knowed they was up to somethin' jest by what I heard 'em say at first, and now I'm onto 'em as big as a house. I'll go straight to Broadway Billy and unfold the whole racket to him, sure's my handle's Ticket."

His decision formed, he set immediately about carrying out his plan.

Some of the workmen on the building had seen him, but had paid little or no attention to him until now one of the bosses espied him.

Ticket was nearly to the hole by which he had gained entrance to the inclosure when this man hallooed at him, and he did not stop but made for the hole with the agility of a rat.

The man ran to catch him, but the Arab was too quick. He pushed his box through and followed it like an eel, the man reaching the spot just in time to be too late; and the door, or gate, was too far away for him to think of getting out in time to catch the lad.

So the boss turned back with a laugh, which was all he could do, seeing that his men were laughing at him.

Ticket, though, was no sooner out than he heard a familiar voice.

"Crackers an' cheese! If it isn't Ticket, Seth, as sure as you're a sphinx and I'm a gillie!"

Happy Harry and Silent Seth happened to be passing the spot at the moment, and both stopped short, wondering what their younger ally of the last recorded "case" was up to now.

Ticket had come out in decidedly a hurry, raising a little cloud of dust in his lively scramble, and now as he got upon his feet he slung his box upon his shoulder and made his acquaintances a comical little bow, at which Happy Harry laughed heartily, while Seth inquired:

"What were you doing in there, Ticket?"

"Pickin' pints fer a puddin'," was the prompt answer. "But, come, let's get out of here 'fore that man comes and gobbles me up. I'll tell you all about it as we go along."

Several had already stopped to learn what was going on, and pushing out of the gathering crowd the three friends made haste to get away from the spot.

"Christopher Columbia!" cried Harry, laughing again. "You came out of that hole, Ticket, as though you had been fired. You looked like a ball of rags with legs and arms attached. Ha, ha, ha!"

"I was in a hurry," Ticket meekly assured. "But," quickly adding, "are you going to the office? 'Cause if you are I'm with ye, and if ye ain't I'm goin' alone, fer I have got the double twist onto one of the biggest bits of rascal work you ever heard of in yer lives."

"Yes, we're going to the office," Seth informed.

"But, what is it?" cried Harry, eagerly.

"Tell us all about it, Ticket."

"Might as well wait till we get to the

office," suggested Seth; "he'll tell the boss, then, and no use his telling it twice."

"You get out!" Harry exclaimed. "Needn't think because your blood runs ice that mine does too; I'm in a fever to know what it's all about, now. Go ahead, Ticket, and reel it off."

So, as they hurried along, Ticket told what he had overheard.

"That sounds like a mystery, sure pop!" commented Harry, when he had heard all. "A hundred thousand dollars in a tin box, and hid away so the heirs can't find it, hey? Why, Seth, it's almost as good as a play."

"It will be one, in which the boss will take part," Seth briefly rejoined.

Arriving at the office they found Billy alone, it being only a little while after his caller had left.

Billy had been thinking over the new case while he waited for his beagles to come in, trying to see his way clear to go to work on it.

He greeted Ticket, and then demanded:

"Well, what result?"

"The best," answered Seth. "We caught him dead to rights and turned him over to a policeman."

"Good. That settles his hash, then. It was what the rascal deserved, too. But, Ticket, what is it brings you here? Or is it only a little friendly call?"

"It's a call on business, sir," the little Arab answered.

"You bet it is!" echoed Harry. "Roll it out to him, Ticket, and see what he will think of it."

So, Ticket "rolled it out" accordingly, telling every word of what he had heard, Billy paying close and silent attention to the end.

When he had done, the young prince of detectives gave vent to a low whistle.

"What do you think about it, boss?" demanded the impetuous Harry. "Don't it sort o' make the symptoms of fever wake up?"

"Here is a pretty fair proof that Ermina Merrett hasn't found the fortune and isn't making use of it," Billy commented. "If she had, this girl Kate would be likely to find it out."

Seth looked at his chief wonderingly, while Harry stared with eyes open to their widest extent.

Ticket looked from one to another, trying to "get on."

Billy allowed them to wonder for a moment, when he broke into a laugh just as Harry cried out:

"Christopher Crackers! What are ye gettin' at, boss, anyhow? Who said anything about any Ermina Merrett? Are ye gettin' off yer base?"

"The fact of the matter is," their chief explained, "I have already taken this very case in hand, to find that hundred thousand for the heir, and we are likely to have a little fun before we are much older."

Forthwith, then, he told his trio of allies all about it, and the matter was talked over at length and plans of action laid as far as was possible. It was yet a case without a clue, but the interest in it had doubled. There was going to be a big fight for a tin box.

CHAPTER III.

OPENING AN OLD ACCOUNT.

THE door was answered by a smart-looking maid in a cap, who took the caller's card with the air of one unbending her dignity to confer a favor.

"Please tell Miss Athorne it is important," the man directed.

The maid did not deign to make any reply but having shown the visitor into the reception-room, went off with his card to carry it to the person whom he had asked to see.

"Deuce take it!" the man exclaimed as soon as left alone, glancing around the room

disdainfully. "One might think I was at the portals of the Queen of Sheba, rather than at the boarding-house of a female cashier of a Twenty-third street store. But, I suppose it's the thing."

After a proper delay the door opened and a rather handsome woman entered the room, clad in a becoming evening gown.

Her age might have been set down safely anywhere between twenty and thirty. It would have been hard to tell which figure to place it nearest. She was dark, with piercing eyes and glossy black hair.

"Mr. Lyddon!" she exclaimed, with evidently more of surprise than of delight. "I have not seen you in a long time. I trust we meet as friends."

"I suppose we do, Miss Athorne," and the man spoke rather bitterly. "You said you would be my friend for life, you remember, the summer when we were rustivating out at Sparta."

"You refer to that evening on the lake, of course. Well, I meant it, Mr. Lyddon; since I could be nothing more to you I could quite well afford to be that, at least. But, what has induced you to call on me after so long a time? I am sure it must be important, as you told the servant."

"Yes, it is important, and it's part business and part sentiment. If you will invite me to sit down I will explain."

"Why, certainly; pardon me; pray be seated, Mr. Lyddon."

Whether she had neglected this politeness purposely or unintentionally we will not stop to question. Maybe it was an oversight, from force of habit in the shop.

They took seats, and the visitor said:

"I have not forgotten the old lady from whom you told me you had great expectations, Miss Athorne."

"The hateful old thing! She is dead."

"You spoke of her in more endearing terms when your expectations were alive, Miss Athorne."

"Maybe it was the expectations *you* had in view, more than anything else, when you condescended to offer me your name."

"You do me an injustice, Irene. I knew you only as a shop-girl—not even a cashier at that;—there, I did not intend to wound your pride. I loved you—love you still—for yourself alone."

"Quite enough, Mr. Lyddon. Please state your business."

"Well, this old lady is dead, as you say, and she has left her property all to Norman Sherwin and Ermina Merrett."

"You seem to know a good deal about the matter, Mr. Lyddon."

"It would be strange if I did not."

"And why strange?"

"Why, I am the nephew of Joseph Doorman, who was Patience Penrose's lover and lawyer combined. I was associated with him in his business, and have now succeeded to the same since his death."

"Oh!"

"Exactly. So, you see, I am in a position to know a thing or two."

"This is all news to me, Mr. Lyddon. I knew you were studying law, of course, but that was all. Then I suppose you know all about the will the hateful old thing left."

"What a dear old thing she would have been if she had only placed you in the position Ermina Merrett occupies!"

"She is another hateful, stuck-up thing."

"You are spiteful, but charming in spite of all. You heard the will read, I believe."

"Yes."

"Then no need for me to rehash that. You know Sherwin was willed a hundred thousand dollars in cash, to be found in a tin box somewhere in the house."

"Yes; and I thought then it wouldn't have hurt the old thing to have left me a little of that. But what are you coming at? You have awakened my interest in the matter afresh."

"What I am coming at is just this: The secret of the hiding-place of that money was in the keeping of my uncle, Joseph Doorman; but what did the old gent do, on hearing that his sweetheart was dead, but keel over and die himself, and, as everybody supposes, the secret died with him."

"But you have it?"

"I have not said so, have I?"

"Well, no, but I supposed you meant to"

"You are supposing too fast, then. I did not say I have it."

"And you have not said you have not got it, either. You say it did not die with him."

"Your pardon, but I did not say that, either. What I did say was, 'As everybody supposes, the secret died with him.' You see, you are too ready to jump at conclusions."

"Then what do you mean? Why have you come to me with all this foolishness, if there is no meaning to what you say?"

"I will tell you that, and gladly. I have come once more to ask your hand in marriage."

Their eyes met, and for some seconds neither spoke.

"Will you have me?" the lawyer demanded.

"Tell me everything, and then I will know better how to answer you," was the reply.

"That is all I have to tell you. I love you, and would make you my wife. I think that ought to cover the whole ground."

"Yes, but you put it in a way to lead me to infer that you—that you—know all about that hundred thousand dollars, and that if I marry you it might be found."

"I have said nothing to lead you to believe that; it is all in your imagination. I am free, however, to say this: I would certainly, in money matters, look to the interests of my wife first."

"But, this is so sudden, Mr. Lyddon—"

"Nonsense! It is three or four years since that night on Morris Lake."

"You must give me time to think about it, though. You can't expect me to answer so important a question in a moment."

"Well, think it over at your leisure. You will, if nothing more, be taken out of the terrible monotony and humdrum of shop life, which I know you are heartily sick of."

"I have seen a good many girls escape it in this way to their sorrow. When I make the change it is going to be for the better decidedly. I will not marry a poor man under any consideration. Money is going to be the main object when I decide to make the change."

"I know that perfectly well. I am not quite a poor man, since my uncle's death. Take time to think it over, and let me know."

"You make it all a cold matter of business."

"Yes, since you force me to do so. Do not, however, lose sight of the fact that I love you and prefer you above any other woman. In pure business parlance, I am giving you first option, as it were."

As he said this he laughed lightly, and rose to go.

"If you would only trust me fully, Mr. Lyddon," the young woman hesitated.

"And isn't that just what I desire most of all to do? I certainly expect to trust my wife fully."

"But, I mean in the matter at which you have been hinting. Why can't we talk it over quite confidentially? I know you mean something."

"Yes, I do mean something, Irene; I mean business. There is really nothing to talk over in confidence, since the love is all on one side. Think it over carefully and let me know."

"How provoking you are!"

"I fail to see how; I have made you the

fairest kind of an offer. I am asking a good deal, I know, but I am willing to give largely in return. It is my love and fortune against your hand. When I asked you before I was a poor man; now—well, now I am not quite so poor as I was, that's all."

"And if I refuse you?"

"You must not refuse. But, if you do, I'll certainly feel too independent ever to ask you again, and will have to look further."

"Indeed! How *very* business-like you are about it, Mr. Lyddon! Well, I will think over your proposition, and let you have my decision at as early a date as possible."

They both laughed, at that, the caller took his leave, and the young woman returned to her room.

There, when she had closed the door, she paced the floor.

"I would give anything to know just what he meant," she said to herself. "It is plain enough, of course, but he would not commit himself. If I really loved the man I would know what to do, but I don't; I love Norman Sherwin, and there is no use my trying to deceive myself. I love him almost madly; and that baby-faced Laura Holman, how I *hate* her!"

She clinched her fists as she hissed the last words, and her face took on an expression that was not becoming, to say the least.

"Yes, it is plain enough what he meant," she presently repeated. "He is in possession of the secret the old lawyer held, and knows where the hundred thousand is hid. If I will marry him he is willing to cheat Norman out of it and give it to me. But, *how* would he get it? That would be stealing, and there would be the danger of discovery, which would make a pretty mess of it all. Now, what am I to do? He must love me, to take such risks; and as for me—well, I can't say that I really *dislove* him."

She continued pacing the floor for a long time, in silent meditation, but at last her mind seemed to be fully made up to some course of action upon which she had decided.

"I'll do it!" she exclaimed firmly. "It's rather unwomanly, I know, but I need care little for that, loving him as I do. I'll go to him and offer myself and the fortune together, and if he accepts I will then worm the secret out of Lyddon, somehow. I'll even go the length of promising to marry him, if I can do it no other way; I hold the key to success, now, and I'm bound to win, one way or other, in spite of old Patience Penrose and her will! I'll see how much love Norman has for Laura, when it comes to the pinch. By the way, Laura and Lyddon wouldn't make a bad match; I'll have to try to bring that about, incidentally."

CHAPTER IV.

PLANNING THE ROBBERY.

OLD Patience Penrose had lived all alone for a number of years in her big, old-fashioned house; that is to say, all alone save for her one servant, Betsy Bennet, who was nearly as old as herself.

The house was one of those grand, old-time mansions of years ago, and was in a section of the city which had once been the aristocratic residence quarter, but which had now long since been left behind in the northward march.

It was a large, roomy house, with a great, wide hall almost as big as a room in a modern dwelling, and with double parlors on the first floor. Then below were basement apartments, their possessor's pride in their day; while above the rooms were on an equal scale.

Here these two old women had lived, with the house closed up almost like a prison, and here, a month ago, Patience Penrose had died.

Now another mistress presided over the mansion.

Ermina Merrett was a rather good-looking girl of the blonde type, but she was about as vain as she was fair.

No sooner in possession than she threw the house open wide from top to bottom, and engaged enough servants to take care of it, to say nothing about living in style.

The house had been elegantly furnished in its day, and so well had Patience Penrose taken care of everything that it was still in excellent preservation throughout and could be made to serve for a considerable while.

But, it is not of the house, or its mistress, or its furniture we would write in particular at this time.

It was on the same evening of the events recorded in the preceding chapter, that a man rung the bell at the basement door of the Penrose mansion.

He was not a bad-looking fellow, and was smartly-dressed, but there was that about him which would have "given him away" to the practiced eye. He had upon him the stamp of the Bowery crook.

His ring answered, he asked to see Kate Kreuger.

Invited to come in, he was shown into a neat little room used by the servants as their reception-room.

In a few minutes a rather buxom young woman came into the room, with a smile of welcome upon her lips and a merry twinkle in her eyes.

"Hello, Tony!" she greeted.

"How are you, Kate?" the cheery return.

The man held out his arms, and they embraced and kissed.

After that they sat down, and for some time their talk was nothing to concern our story.

"Well, how do you like your new place?" the man presently asked.

"Oh! bang up," was the slangy response.

"I've got a genuine pudding of it here."

"And how do you like your mistress?"

"First rate. She's one of the girls, you bet."

"She seems to have plenty of the ready rocks to handle."

"You bet she has. There's nothing mean about her style, I tell you."

"Maybe she has found that tin box you were telling me about, if that wasn't a fake."

"No fake about it, Tony; but, she hasn't found it yet, that I know for sure. She looks for it every day."

"And so do you, I do not doubt, my charming Kate."

"Well, I have got one eye open for it, that's so, and if I find it you bet I will set up in style."

"And then you'd discard a poor chap like me, I s'pose. But, you are not very likely to find it, I guess, after they have hunted a month."

"Oh, no, I wouldn't bounce you, Tony; and as to finding it, I don't know; it's as likely to be me as anybody, for I go nosing around every chance I get, be sure of that."

"I hope you find it, then, if you'd share with me. Isn't your mistress afraid of robbers?"

"Not any. How could they rob her of what can't be found?"

"Well, that's so, too. Still, she must have a boodle, to open in the style she has. She was poor before, wasn't she?"

"Oh, yes, she worked; was forelady in some shop or other; they are the proudest kind, you know. Yes, she's got rocks now; the old lady left her the bank-book, you know."

"Then that accounts for it. No chance for robbers if the green is in the bank. Besides, I don't suppose they could get in, anyhow."

"Oh, I don't know about that."

"Could they?"

"They might, easy, if they knowed the weak points about the shebang."

"Then you had all better be careful how

you let the weak points be known, or it might invite some of the gentry to make a call."

"I guess there's no fear of any one finding out, but there is a window in the rear that can't be fastened tight, and it would be the easiest thing in the world for a visitor to get in that way."

"Yes, if he could jump over the house to get at the window."

"Oh, he could come through an open alley between two of the houses in the rear on the other street."

"How about the fence?"

"It's pretty high, but the burglar who couldn't get over a fence wouldn't be much of a burglar."

"Ha, ha, ha! No, I guess you are right. There's little danger, however; I guess, if there's nothing here to invite them, and it seems there isn't. I hope you'll find that box, though."

"So do I, Tony. You know I am honest in most things, but I'm not honest enough to resist temptation if a cool hundred thousand falls in my way. Just think of it! Why, I expect when Miss Merrett and Mr. Sherwin get married they'll tear down the house but they'll find it."

"Hal! they are going to marry?"

"Well, that was in the will, I hear saying around. I know she is willing enough, whether he is or not."

"How many servants are there here now, did you tell me?"

"There's five of us, including the big darky footman. He's the only man in the house."

"He's the bouncer, I suppose. I suppose he would make it warm for the burglar we were talking about, eh? Ha, ha!"

"I don't believe he would at all. He's a great big booby. The bravest thing about him is the buttons on his uniform—if that's what you call it."

"Oh, well, we'll drop the burglar. He isn't likely to appear, anyhow, and no use making you nervous for nothing. But, I must be going, for I have an appointment at nine and must be on hand."

"What! going so soon?"

"Yes, I must."

"Maybe you have got another girl—"

"No, no, Kate, honor bright; it is a man I have got to see, and on business."

"Well, I'll have to take your word for it, I suppose, but you don't want to let me ketch you foolin' me, Tony."

"Let me know of it when you do, Ducky."

"You needn't be afraid I won't, and in a way you won't like, too."

The crook had now got the information he had come for, and as it was growing near the time for him to meet Hugh Higgin, as arranged, he soon took his leave.

Kate followed him to the door, and out, and detained him for a few words at the area gate, but Tony pleaded lack of time and cut it short there and was soon going rapidly up the street.

The girl watched him for a few moments, then went back into the house.

"Crackers an' cheese!" exclaimed a voice in whisper, and a form emerged out of the hole in which the further basement window stood. "Reckon it will be an easy racket fer burglars, with a helper inside!"

Harry it was, and lightly leaping the fence he set off after Mr. Crook in a way that smacked of business.

Broadway Billy's aides were on duty, it seemed.

It was easy enough for Harry to keep his man in sight, for the fellow had never a suspicion of being followed.

He led the way straight to a disreputable-looking saloon on a street of about the same stamp, and there entered, Harry following him in a little later.

Hugh Higgin was there and waiting.

So, likewise, was Ticket the Arab, in a

slight disguise and now trying to sell some song papers to the patrons of the den.

That is to say, the little fellow had been so engaged, but just now he was on a chair behind one of the tables, all curled up and apparently fast asleep.

Silent Seth, too, was there, and as Happy Harry looked around the place he caught a signal from him and withdrew, Seth getting up soon after and going out, leaving the field to Ticket.

"Well, I see yer got here," observed Higgin, as Vangriff sat down.

"Yes, and on time, too, if you will notice. I have just come from seeing the girl I told you about."

"And what did she hev ter say? Did yer git the lay of ther land down fine, so as ter make et reasonably plain sailin'? Did yer do that?"

"Yes, yes; and that tin box hasn't been found yet, Hugh. The fact of the business is, they can't find it, and it may not be much use for us to try. What do you think?"

"I'm goin' to give et one try, anyhow."

"All right, then, that is settled."

"I'll do et ter-morrer night."

"Why not to-night?"

"Can't do et ter-night, nohow. But, is ther gal goin' ter fix et so's we kin easy git in?"

"You don't suppose I gave myself away to her, do you? You must think I am crazy. No, we'll get in on our own accord, of course."

"But, ye say she gev ye p'int's."

"I got them out of her. The fact is, I am working a double racket there, and she mustn't know anything about my hand in this, don't you see? I have got it all down fine all the same."

"Well, give me the lay-out, then, so's I kin be studyin' of it."

"Do you take me for a flat, Hugh?"

"Wot's ther matter?"

"If you can't do the job till to-morrow night, that will be plenty time enough for me to reveal the scheme to you."

"Well, then, blast et, we'll go ter-night, sence ye are so mighty 'fraid ter trust me. We'll tackle ther job about one o'clock, ef ye think ye kin trust me till then."

All of which, as well as all that followed, was faithfully noted by Ticket, the Arab; Broadway Billy's human phonograph.

CHAPTER V.

MEETING WITH A SURPRISE.

THE hour was growing late when Broadway Billy rung the bell at the Penrose mansion.

A big darky in livery opened the door, and the young prince of metropolitan detectives asked if he might see Miss Merrett.

"I doan' know 'bout dat, sah, at dis late hour; mebbly she hab retired, sah. I will find out. Who shall I tell her it am, sah? Is yo' business 'portant or otherwise, sah?"

"It is both important and otherwise," Billy assured. "Here, deliver my card, and say that I must see her whether she has retired or not. Do you understand? Tell her it is on business of the utmost importance; also otherwise."

"Yes, sah."

The darky pretended he understood it all, to which his face gave the lie, and having closed the door he pointed to a seat in the hall and disappeared bearing the card Billy had given him.

In a few moments he reappeared.

"De lady will see yo' shortly, sah," he informed. "Please to walk right in heah, sah, an' she will be down d'reckly."

So saying, he ushered Billy into the reception-room, with its quaint, old furniture, and there left him to await the coming of the mistress of the mansion.

Billy had not long to wait.

In a few minutes the door opened and Ermina Merrett came in.

The young detective measured her with one swift glance. A rather good-looking blonde, but one whom he would not trust very far.

"You wished to see me, sir?" she spoke.

"Yes, if you are Miss Merrett," was the response.

"That is my name, sir. You are a stranger to me, I know."

"You may have heard of me. I did not send you my business card. I am a professional detective, popularly known as Broadway Billy."

"Goodness mercy!"

The young woman clasped her hands, and a look of alarm came into her face.

Billy had taken care to speak in low tone, for he did not desire to have his business known to the servants, especially Kate Kreuger.

"I must have a few minutes' private talk with you," Billy went on to say, "and as I do not want to be overheard I will not speak aloud. When did you discover the tin box, Miss Merrett?"

The girl's face now grew decidedly pale, and she gave a gasp.

"Why, sir, I—I have not found it," she declared earnestly. "Truly I have not found it, sir."

"I was under the impression you had. Pardon the mistake. Of course you will not deny that you know to what I refer."

"Oh, no, certainly not; you mean the tin box containing the hundred thousand dollars that was left to Mr. Sherwin. There is no hope of finding it, now, I guess."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because the house has been so thoroughly searched."

"Still, it must be here somewhere, if it has not been found. It only remains to solve the secret."

"And have you come to look for it, at this hour?"

"No; I have come to protect it against robbers who intend paying a visit to-night."

"Goodness mercy!"

"You see, there was reason to believe you had found the treasure, and that these men knew of it and were coming to relieve you of it."

"And what are you going to do?"

"I want your permission to remain in the house all night, that is all. You may retire in peace; I'll take care of them when they come. I don't want one of the servants to know anything about it."

"But, how do I know who you are? What if you are not what you claim to be?"

"I think I can satisfy you on that point. Here is my badge, and here's a newspaper clipping with a woodcut of myself which you may compare with the original."

"Yes, I cannot doubt you, sir; but how can you think of remaining here and the servants not know anything about it? That seems impossible, for Washington will remain to let you out."

"Easily got over, I think," said Billy. "Tell him I'm your cousin and have me put to bed. When the house is still I can come down and take up my watch."

"I do not like that plan at all, sir. Would it not be better to take Washington into your confidence?"

"Do you know that he is to be trusted?"

"Yes."

"Well, all right, for remain I must, somehow. Call him in and we'll see how he takes it."

Billy could have worked his scheme another way, of course, but he had an object in view in taking the course he had.

First, he wanted to see Miss Merrett, to form his opinion of her, and next, he wanted to know whether or not she had herself found the tin box. But on that point he was not satisfied.

Her look of alarm when he named his business, and her paleness when he spoke of

the tin box, accusing her of having found it, had made their impression; and yet, it might have been only natural emotion on her part and nothing of proof of her guilt in the matter.

She stepped to the door and bade the liveried darky enter the room.

He obeyed, coming inside, where he stood as stiff as a statue on exhibition.

"Come here, Sambo; I want to talk with you," said Billy.

"Sah!" and the darky drew himself up until his very buttons glistened with dignity.

"I hab yo' to know, sah, my name is Washington Jackson Snipe."

"I could never get over all that when I wanted to speak to you," Billy flatly declared. "I'll call you Wash, or Snipe, just as you please; but I can't bind myself to your full name."

Miss Merrett here laughed.

"I hear the others calling him Jack Snipe, and oftener Jacksnipe," she made remark.

Billy laughed too, while the darky looked very much injured. However, the detective proceeded to make it all right with him.

"I'll be easy with you," he said. "I'll call you simply Jack. So, Jack, I want to tell you, quietly, that you are going to have robbers here to-night, and you and I must capture them."

The big fellow gave a gasp, his face took on a dirty-gray tinge, and his eyes rolled.

"What is more," Billy added, "you are not to mention this to any one, but you and I will keep watch after the house has been shut up. Now, I'm going to step out of sight behind one of these curtains here, and your mistress will go with you into the hall, where she will say good-night, as though to me, and you will then open and close the front door, and I'll be gone. Do you see?"

"It is so plain he can't help it, sir," spoke the young woman. "Come along, Jack, and carry it out."

She led the way into the hall, where she bade good-night to an imaginary personage, and the darky performed his part as Billy had laid it out for him.

That done, she said something to the darky in a lower tone, and returned up-stairs, while Broadway Billy went to take his place behind the curtain as he had indicated his intention of doing.

As he stepped to the curtain, though, and drew it aside, a most surprising thing happened.

A strong arm was flung around his neck, together with a fold of the curtain, and in the same moment he received a heavy blow on the side of the head that made him stagger.

Another fold of the curtain was flung around him, another blow was dealt, and down the young detective went, dragging the curtain with him, and in the same second he heard hasty but light steps across the floor toward the rear parlor, the sliding doors of which he had noticed to be slightly apart.

With a couple of hasty jerks Billy freed his head, just in time to see a man in a mask dart through the opening between the doors.

One effort more and Billy was up and after him, revolver in hand ready for use if needed.

The rear room was dark, save for the light that came in from the other, and as Billy entered he was no more than in time to catch another glimpse of the man as he disappeared through an open window.

Billy was there in no time, and looked out, but the man was gone as completely as though he had taken wings. Not a sign of him was to be seen anywhere, though the window opened upon a rear piazza and it was some distance to the steps leading down to the ground.

Billy had not put his head out the win-

dow, he knew the danger of thus inviting a blow should the man be at one side close against the house and waiting for him; but now he put out his hat, cautiously, as a decoy. It was done safely, however, and when no blow came the detective ventured his head, taking a thorough view.

Scarcely a quarter of a minute had thus been lost, but the man was indeed out of sight.

Billy stepped out, quietly, and looked all around.

Here was more mystery.

It was certain that this man was neither Tony Vangriff nor Hugh Higgin, for Happy Harry and Silent Seth were attending to them.

Knowing that Higgin would play Vangriff a trick if he could, Billy was not going to allow him the chance if he could help it, and as no signal came from Harry or Seth he knew it was neither of these men.

Who, then, was it?

Not only that, but how had the person gained entrance into the house?

It looked as though there was an accomplice within, who had left the window over the piazza open.

The darky had now returned into the front room, and Billy heard him utter an exclamation on discovering the curtain on the floor in a heap.

Fearful lest he might raise an alarm, Billy sprung in at the window again and ran to the folding doors, where he motioned to the colored fellow to hold his peace and say nothing.

"Don't say a word, Jack," he cautioned in whisper, "but the deuce is to pay here. There was a man behind that curtain when I went to hide there, and we had a little set-to in which I came off second best. Have you any idea who it was?"

"Good hebbins!" was the exclamation of alarm. "Yo' doan mean it! Dis am de debbil's own house, fo' shua, what wid mysteries, an' robbers, an' sech; ter say nothin' 'bout ghostes what goes prowlin' around at all hours ob de night. No, I doan' know who it was, but I has had 'bout enough, shua as my name is Washington Jackson Snipe."

CHAPTER VI.

SOME NOCTURNAL DOINGS.

BILLY had to smile, for the alarm of the big darky seemed genuine enough, but he set about reassuring him all he could.

He was interested in what the fellow had let fall about ghosts, and meant to question him further when the opportunity came. For the present he only urged him to put the curtain out of the way and turn out the lights.

This was done, and Billy took his station by the rear open window while he waited for the house to become quiet, when the darky was to join him. Nothing further happened, gradually the sounds of the house died out, and at last the darky came into the room.

"Am yo' heah, boss?" he whispered.

"Yes, right here," answered Billy.

"Come along."

The black felt his way forward, and took a seat at Billy's side.

"Say, mebbly dat feller was yo' robber w'ot you come heah to ketch," he suggested.

He had had time to think it over, and this came to him naturally, upon studying the whole matter as he knew it.

"No, that's impossible," Billy assured. "Mine won't be here for a couple of hours yet, and there'll probably be a pair of them when they do come."

"Well, I wish you would count me out of it, if yo' doan' mind; I don't hab no desire to figger in ketchin' no robbers, I doan'; not dat I's afeerd, yo' know, but a feller might git shot, yo' see."

"Yes, that's so. Well, maybe I'll let you

off. But, tell me what you meant about ghosts, Jack."

"Meant jes' what I said, boss; dis heah house am ha'nted, shua."

"You have seen them, then?"

"Shua."

"What are they like?"

"Huh! Doan' yo' know what ghostes is like? Dey's all in white, ob cou'se, an' dey goes floatin' 'roun' in de atmusfeer like nothin' a tall."

"And how came you to see them?"

"Why, I—I done heard a noise one night, an—an—I looked out ob my doah, an' dere dey was, a-floatin' up an' down de hall like all mad; an' dat was enough fo' me, you bet."

"And it's quite enough for me, too," declared Billy, the smile on his face invisible in the dark. "I'll let you off, Jack, if you'll go to bed and go to sleep, for I am not afraid of ghosts or robbers either; not saying that you are, you understand."

"All right, sah! No, I ain' afraid, ob cou'se; but den I need my rest."

"Certainly. Well, good-night and good sleep to you."

The darky responded to that and glided away, glad enough to get out of a disagreeable situation so easily, apparently.

Billy had his own opinion about the ghosts, and how Mr. Snipe had come to see them. He believed the darky had been prowling for the tin box, and had been frightened out by others on the same errand.

He now closed the window, taking care to notice what manner of fastening it had, and he was sure no one could have opened it from without unless it had previously been unfastened within. Had the mysterious man, whoever he was, an accomplice in that house?

Undoubtedly his mission, too, had been the finding of the tin box.

Billy had with him a flat, pocket bull's-eye, but he hesitated about lighting it unless it became absolutely necessary.

He did, however, light it, in order to have it ready when occasion required. Turned low, it would burn for a great length of time, even in his pocket, to which he returned it after lighting.

Having locked the window, he prepared to leave the room, to go below where it had been planned the robber should enter, according to the report he had had from his Arab ally, Ticket; and he knew he could depend on that to the letter. He called Ticket his phonograph.

While lighting his lantern he had glanced around the room, locating the doors, and now he advanced to one which, he judged, opened upon the hall.

He was not mistaken, and stepping out he closed the door silently and felt along to find the stairs.

It was darker than Erebus, and he had to proceed with caution.

There was no hurry about it, however, so he took his time, and ere long was safely down in the basement hall, without having made a sound that could draw attention even with the household awake.

Stopping at the bottom of the stairs for a moment, he fancied he heard something on the floor above.

His ears were keen, and hearing it again, he knew he was not mistaken. The next moment a faint light appeared at the top of the stairs.

Billy drew away quickly, feeling along the wall, and to his satisfaction discovered a deep recess alongside the front door, into which he stepped, pressing himself as close as possible.

A person was coming slowly down the stairs, carrying a tiny light, and as Billy looked out from his hiding-place he saw it was a woman. As she came nearer he found she was old, and hence knew it must be the old servant, Betsy Bennet.

"One of Jacksnipe's ghosts, no doubt,"

said Billy to himself. "I'll see what she is going to do."

The old woman was barefooted, with simply a skirt on over her nightgown, and would not have made a sound had it not been that her aged joints now and again gave out a slight creak.

She made no pause, but crossed the lower hall and carefully opened the door of what proved to be the dining-room.

This she did not close again but left ajar, and as soon as she was within, the watching detective crept near and looked to learn what her errand was.

She had put her tiny night-lamp on the table, and stepping to the chimney, in which was an old-fashioned fireplace, she began feeling carefully over every inch of its surface.

Billy was led to believe the money might be hid somewhere there, for it was possible that this old servant would know something about the hiding-place, even though she might not know the precise spot or how to get at it. But, though she spent almost or quite an hour, her search was fruitless.

Finally, with a sigh, she gave up, and taking up her lamp again started to leave the room.

Billy sprung back to his place of hiding, and she came out and went slowly upstairs, having closed the door as she had found it.

As soon as she was out of sight and hearing Billy came forth and entered the room, closing the door, and now he brought out his bull's-eye and flashed it over the chimney.

The woodwork was inlaid and carved, a combination of both, and it was quite probable that there was a secret drawer or door in it somewhere; but if so it did not appear at a glance, and as the clock on the mantel marked half-past twelve, Billy soon turned off his light.

Be had taken a good survey of the room, and proceeded to the kitchen in the dark without trouble.

The rear windows were faintly discernible. Without loss of time Billy made the circuit of the room with caution, feeling for a place in which to hide himself.

The idea of going into one of the closets did not please him at all, for the robber would be pretty certain to look in them, and Billy wanted to give him time to search.

Finally, in one corner, his feet touched what seemed to be a curtain, and on feeling with his hand he found that was what it was. It was hanging from the edge of the line of stationary tubs, and nearest the window was a table where there was lots of room.

The curtain hung here, too, and Billy was soon behind it.

Here he waited, patiently, and at last his patience was rewarded. He heard a sound without, and then the window was carefully tried.

There was a pause, then the click and creak, faintly, of some instrument being used, and a breath of cool air told that the window had been lifted. The next moment the light of a bull's-eye was flashed around.

"It's all right an' all clear," a voice hoarsely whispered, and then the light was turned off and Billy heard the man getting in.

"Will yer come in too, or wait?" the same voice then asked.

"I'll come in, of course," the answer.

"Come on, then."

Another pause, while the second man got in, and then the light was once more turned on.

Peering cautiously out, Billy saw that both men were carefully masked, but he recognized them easily enough as Tony Van-griff and Hugh Higgin.

They took a survey of the kitchen, looked casually into the closets, and after a few

minutes proceeded to the next room, evidently having no hope that the treasure could be found here.

When they were gone, Billy came out and stepped to the open window.

He heard a cricket-call without, and answering this, faintly, two other persons came to the window, when a further exchange of signals was made.

The new-comers were Happy Harry and Silent Seth, and with Billy's help they dropped noiselessly into the room. The window was then closed, and the two aides took up their station there.

Having given them some words of direction, Billy crept out to follow the two burglars, to learn whether they discovered anything or not.

It was a ticklish task, but Broadway Billy was equal to its performance, and he followed the two rascals throughout their hunt for the hidden fortune without betraying his presence.

Their search was a failure, as they might have known it would be, with no clew to guide them. However, Higgin was not the fellow to allow it to be a blank entirely if he could help it, and upon their return to the dining-room he gave his attention to some plate.

He filled a small bag with such selections as he saw fit to make, and when he had done the pair were ready to take their leave.

They passed out to the kitchen, and were half-way across to the window before they made an alarming discovery. Higgin flashed his lantern toward the window, preparatory to shutting it off, when it revealed two youths with revolvers in hand, and with an ejaculation Higgin dropped his bag and turned off the light; but Silent Seth flashed a light upon them, while Happy Harry cried out:

"Hands up! It's no use, my daisies, for you have run against the worst old snag you ever struck in your lives. This is Broadway Billy's combination, and it's set to go off at hair-trigger touch. We never—that's the ticket, boss; now they are our pickles, sure enough!"

CHAPTER VII.

SOMEWHAT SUSPICIOUS.

It was a victory complete, and about as clever a capture of the kind as ever was made.

While Happy Harry was speaking, Broadway Billy caught hold of the fellows from behind, a hand of each, and like a flash had them coupled together with a pair of steel bracelets.

"Don't you try it!" he cried, thrusting a revolver in their faces as they reached for weapons with their free hands. "You'll be brought to a hasty repentance if you do, I tell you. Seth, just relieve them of their pistols, if they've got any."

The Silent Shadower stepped forward promptly to obey.

"Yer had better leave us alone," growled Hugh Higgin. "We ain't done nothin' ter you, an' this is our own business."

"It happens to be my business just now," returned Billy. "Let's see who you are, anyhow. Why, Hugh Higgin, how d'e do? Hello! this is a bad fix for you to be in, Tony Vangriff."

The two fellows looked cheap and sick enough as Billy tore away their masks, and their faces were not a little pale.

"Say, can't you let us go?" asked Tony, eagerly. "I'll come down handsome, if you only will. How did you know us, anyhow? You never had anything to do with us before, that I'm sure of."

"Nary a let go!" Billy grimly assured. "As to how I know you, I happen to know more than one crook in this little town. There, now you're disarmed, and you will not be hurt if you do not cut up any

tricks. Light the gas, Harry, and we'll alarm the household."

Happy Harry obeyed, and when the gas had been lighted in the rooms and hall, Billy proceeded to call up the sleepers.

Miss Merrett was the first one on the spot, all dressed, and it was plain she had been waiting.

The next was the darky, and after him the others, in short order.

"Goodness mercy!" the mistress of the mansion had exclaimed immediately, in excitement. "What does all this mean, sir?"

She spoke to Broadway Billy.

"It means, lady," Billy answered, "that these fellows broke into your house with the intention of robbing you, and I have been able to catch them in the act. It will go rough with them."

"And serve them right, the wretches! Are you an officer, sir? Take them, then, and lock them up, and I'll make it my business to press the matter. You have my thanks, sir, and I'll see to it that you are properly rewarded."

She asked no further questions, and made it appear that she had never seen Billy before in her life.

Billy had some exchange of remarks with her, while at the same time he was studying the servants and judging of their worth as far as possible.

He had no trouble to pick out Kate Kreuger, for the surprise with which she had recognized Tony Vangriff had made it plain who she was, and Tony had given her a quick signal.

She took his hint and did not let it be known that she recognized him. She would hardly have done so anyhow, for that would have been to draw suspicion upon herself and possibly it might have led to her arrest as an accomplice. She kept quiet and apart.

Billy explained how the robbers had got in, recommending that better fastenings should be put on, and finally took leave with his prisoners.

These were taken to the nearest station and turned over to the police, Billy entering charges against them.

"There," he remarked to his beagles, on leaving the station, "we have two the less to buck against, anyhow. There is going to be a hot fight for the tin box, and every one we knock out will count."

Early the next morning, or as early as he could expect to find it open, Billy called at the office of the deceased lawyer.

He found a man in charge, and proceeded at once to business.

"You are in Mr. Doorman's place, sir?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir; I am carrying on the business," the civil answer.

"And your name is—"

"Paul Lyddon, sir."

"Mine is William Weston. I have called regarding that will left by Patience Penrose, and especially the legacy she left to Norman Sherwin."

"Ah! yes; a curious case that, very. You are a detective, then? Ah, yes, quite right for him to make every effort to find the fortune, but I am afraid he never will."

"But, it must be in the house."

"Undoubtedly it is, sir, somewhere, but who can say where?"

"Then you do not know?"

"Why, no, certainly not; it was a secret my uncle held, and it died with him, of course."

"I thought maybe he had shared it with you, in anticipation of anything that might happen to him of a sudden. Or, that possibly he had left it in writing."

"Not he, sir! I have no doubt but Patience Penrose had forbid his trusting any one, and he would not think of betraying a trust, especially with her. Besides, it was no trifling sum."

"You are right; the more reason why

more care should have been taken that it should come into the hands of the legatee."

"The woman thought she had that fixed all right; no one could foresee that both she and my uncle would die on the same day. Had he died first, she could then have intrusted her secret to another."

"Yes, that's so; it was fate that upset the plan, of course. Then there was absolutely no clue left among your uncle's papers?"

"Not the slightest. I became interested in the matter, and looked well, but nothing was to be found."

"Have you looked so well that further search would be quite useless?"

"I think I have. I'm quite sure I have."

"Then I can gain nothing here. Was in hope that through you I might get a clue to the hiding-place of the fortune."

"And I am sorry I cannot be of use to you. As I told Mr. Sherwin, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to place the fortune in his hands, if I could only find it."

"Have you searched the house?"

"Yes, on two occasions, with him. We were baffled completely. That, however, was to be expected, for the woman would never have put such a sum in a place where it would be likely to be discovered by accident."

"You are right. I feel that it will be useless for me to make the same search with him, but I have an engagement to do so to-day."

"More was said, Billy angling skillfully for anything the man might let fall, but nothing was gained."

From there he went to meet Sherwin, and together they proceeded to the Penrose residence.

There they first paid their respects to the mistress of the mansion, after which they asked to see the old servant, Betsy Bennet, in private.

"I understand," said Billy, "that you were more like a sister to Miss Penrose than like a servant. It is strange that she did not trust you with the secret hiding-place of her money rather than Mr. Doorman."

This after other remarks which had led up to it.

"Lor' bless you, no," the old woman declared. "She thought the world an' all of Mr. Doorman, an' there was nobody like him to Patience Penrose."

"Then you have no idea where this money is concealed?"

"Not a bit, sir, not the least bit," was the answer.

"Have you looked for it?"

"Yes, I won't deny that, I have looked for it; but, bless you, it ain't no more to be found 'n a needle lost in a haystack."

"Was there any particular place about the house which Miss Penrose seemed to take more care of than another? Any place she seemed to have under her especial watch or guarding?"

"No, sir, none."

"How about the carved chimney down in the dining-room?"

He noted that the old woman gave a slight start, at that, and she looked from him to Sherwin and back again.

"I don't know what you mean, now," she declared.

Billy did not speak at once, but gave her time to think, the while watching her face to note her emotions, for they were quite plainly revealed.

His gaze seemed to confuse her.

"Do you think the hiding-place is there?" he demanded.

"It might be," she admitted.

"What makes you think it might be? Come, if you are the friend of Mr. Sherwin here, and want to aid him, tell us all you can."

"There is no good reason why I should

think it," she declared, "but it was the only room in which Patience Penrose lived when she an' me was alone here together."

"Well, there is something in that; I take it that she would want to be near her treasure as much as possible. Still, this is no proof that the money is hid in that room. Come, Mr. Sherwin, we may as well look around and satisfy ourselves that we cannot find it."

They searched, and well, but in vain.

Miss Merrett, Betsy Bennet, and all the servants lent assistance, but it ended as the previous hunt had ended, in failure.

Finally they took their leave, and as soon as they were away from the house Sherwin asked:

"Well, what is your opinion of her? Do you think she has found it?"

"I hardly know," answered Billy.

"There are some reasons why I should suspect her, and others why I should not. We have the address of the bank, we'll go there and learn what we can."

So, talking along the way, they went to a bank not far from that neighborhood, where they made inquiry concerning what deposit Patience Penrose had had there, and the amount Ermina Merrett had drawn out.

They found the old woman had an account there, not a small sum nor yet a very large one; and they found, too, that Ermina had not drawn a dollar since her aunt's death! Here, then, was suspicion afresh against the fair heiress.

Had she found the tin box? That was the question.

CHAPTER VIII.

TICKET SCORES A POINT.

WHEN Norman Sherwin reached home, and when Broadway Billy entered his office, after their forenoon's work, each found a caller awaiting him.

The person whom Sherwin found waiting for him in the parlor of his lodging-house, was one to whom introduction is hardly necessary, for when informed of her presence he stepped into the parlor immediately.

"Miss Athorne!" he exclaimed. "I am glad to see you, I assure you."

"Which I am pleased to hear you say, Norman," was the sweet response, as she cordially gave her hand.

The female cashier was taking a day or two off, having sent word to the store that morning that she was sick and could not take her place.

"Pray take your seat again," Sherwin urged. "This is something unexpected, and for that reason I appreciate it all the more. But, you have some business with me, I suppose."

"Why do you suppose that?"

"I know of no other reason why you should call on me."

"Well, I will admit that I have come on business, then, Norman—if you will allow me to use your name."

"Ladies may venture to take liberties which men would not dare to take," was the response to that. "I am at your service, Miss Athorne."

"You may call me Irene, if you wish," she gave gracious permission. "I would not think of taking where I could not give. Anyhow, we have known each other so long, you know."

"Yes, that is true; and now for our business."

"Anxious to have it done with, I see. Anxious to have me gone?"

"Not so at all; the fact is, you have aroused my curiosity and I am eager to know what is coming."

"I have come to talk with you about the money your aunt willed to you, and which is now among the things which are not—as it were; that is, if you will hear me and believe me."

"I can promise the first readily enough,

and see no reason why the second should not follow as a matter of course."

"There is one thing I could wish."

"And what is that?"

"That I might be Laura Holman instead of myself— No, no, I don't mean that at all; I could wish to be Laura Holman and myself at the same time. Do I make it plain?"

Her face was flushed, and he appeared not a little excited.

"I understand what you say," he faltered, "but I hardly know what you mean. What are you coming at?"

"Why, I will tell you. I have come here with that determination, and I will not cheat myself out of it because it is a delicate matter. You can but know that I prefer your company above that of any other gentleman, Norman."

"I know we have always got along well together, Miss Athorne."

"Then you will not call me Irene?"

"If you insist."

"Yes, yes; and I beg that you will do so. Norman, I love you, and I have it in my power to make you far more happy than Laura Holman ever could."

She spoke rapidly, breathlessly, almost, and caught his hand as he tried to draw away from her, his own face pale.

"Irene!" he gasped.

"Yes, yes, I mean it!" she cried. "Do not despise me; that would kill me, now that I have dared so much."

"No, no, I won't despise you; far from it, if you are honest in what you declare; but, you have changed the subject suddenly. You said you had come to talk with me, about my lost fortune."

"And you think it is *that* I am after?"

"I do not say so."

"No, no, I tell you truly it is not; at the same time I have come to talk about it. I can tell you where to find it, Norman."

"The deuce!"

"I readily pardon you for that; I know it must surprise you."

"But, surely you do not mean it. Where did you get an inkling of where it is concealed?"

"I can tell you nothing, or rather I will tell you nothing. If you have discovered that I am just a little soft, confessing what I have, do not think I am also a fool."

"I know you are far from being that. However, go on and tell us just what you have in mind."

"Yes, I will: I have come to *sell* this secret to you."

"Hal now it is business. Well, you tell me where to find that tin box and I'll give you a twentieth of whatever it contains."

"How generous! But, my price is not money. I want you to discard Laura Holman and let me make you happy in her stead, and then I will place this money in your hands."

"Impossible."

"Can she bring you such a dower as that?"

"She brings me no dower at all, but she has my heart, and in justice to her I cannot listen to another word from you upon such a subject."

He rose as he said this, she following his example, her eyes flashing.

"You despise me!" she hoarsely whispered. "You will now scorn me for having confessed that I love you!"

"You have known me for years; you knew me even before I knew Laura. Why did you wait until I had fallen heir to this fortune before making your confession? Your delay argues against you."

"Ha, ha, ha! You have *heired* a fortune, yes; but you have not *got* it yet, and you are not likely to get it. When you are tired of searching you may come to me, but you have heard my price and you need not come

unless you are prepared to pay it. I will now take my leave."

"Do you know where that box is?"

"I have in my possession the means for finding out where it is, if I do not."

"Well, I cannot pay the price, so I will have to let you keep your secret. I stand ready to fulfill the offer I made you, however."

"Pah! I bid you good-day, Norman Sherwin!"

With that and a toss of her head she was gone, leaving Sherwin to stare after her in amazement.

He watched her from the window until she passed beyond range, when he left the parlor and repaired to his own apartment upstairs.

There he threw himself upon a chair and tried to think it out. If she really did possess such knowledge as she claimed to have, how had she come by it? Here was a question for Broadway Billy.

Meantime, what of Billy's visitor?

This was none other than Ticket, the Arab, who had been making merry with Happy Harry while he awaited the coming of the chief.

"You here, Ticket?" Billy greeted.

"You let he is, boss!" cried Harry, "and he's got p'inters fer you linked together like so many sassafras."

"Well, I'm glad to hear that; but suppose you let him answer for himself."

"All right, boss," Harry acquiesced. "Ticket," with a bow to him, "you have got the floor; take it and stand on it *hard*!"

"Well, Ticket, what is it?" asked Billy.

"You know when I left you last night, after gittin' that talk in the saloon fer ye?"

"Certainly, my boy."

"Well, you told me I'd better go home—that was what you said, but I hadn't any all the same. Anyhow, you said I'd better get my night's sleep, but I didn't feel like givin' up yet."

"Well, what did you do after that?"

"Why, I went pokin' my nose around this place where the robbery was to be, to wait and see the fun."

"Hal now I begin to suspect something. Go on and tell me all about it. I begin to believe you are a first-class Ticket, unlimited."

"Don't know nothin' 'bout that. I'm little, but I get there just the same. Well, I went in that alley between the houses on the back street and crept through to the fence, and there I found a hole and crawled through it. Then I got in a dark corner and there I waited. I could sleep there just as well as anywhere if I *couldn't* keep awake, so I made up my mind to make a night of it, anyhow. Well, I was there, when all of a sudden a man popped out of one of the winders like he was shot out."

"Just as I suspected. Go on."

"Yes, he popped, but that was the last of him, fer he was gone so quick I couldn't tell where he went to, hardly. Then another man showed himself at the winder, an' I could just make out it was a man. I s'pected it was you, but I da'n't let on fer fear of t'other feller. So, I waited an' watched, both eyes open, an' purty soon somethin' was movin' 'long the fence."

"So, *that* was his trick, eh; threw himself in the darkest shadow?"

"He was as close as a cat to the bottom of the fence, boss, an' he moved like he was a sly one, too, till he came to that hole, when through he went, an' then I heard him on his feet, an' I tell ye I was through that hole again not long behind him, an' was after him like I was his shadder; an' so we had it, to make it short, till I follered him clear home, or to a house where he let himself in, an' that was the end of it."

"Where was that house?" asked Billy.

Ticket told him, and Billy complimented him highly. Here was a clue to the infor-

mation he had so much desired, a clue to the identity of the mysterious man of the previous night.

CHAPTER IX.

TRYING TO DETERMINE.

It was early in the afternoon when Norman Sherwin dropped in to see the young prize-hunter. He found him alone.

Billy greeted him cheerfully, invited him to be seated, and immediately made the observation:

"You have discovered something, Mr. Sherwin?"

"What makes you think that?"

"Why, I read it in your face."

"You mean you are guessing at it, from the fact that I have called so soon after seeing you."

"That tells me you have something to make known, of course, but it is your face which shows it to be a discovery and a favorable one—or at any rate, so you think it."

"Well, you are right, no use to deny it; I have a clue almost within reach."

"Almost within reach?"

"Yes, but not quite, I fear, unless you are able to pluck it; I certainly see no way of getting at it."

"Explain."

Thereupon Sherwin told all about the caller he had found awaiting him upon his return home, withholding nothing which he thought would be useful to the detective.

"Now, what do you think of it?" he demanded, upon concluding.

"When there is a woman at the bottom of it you never know what to think," was the response. "That is about the strangest feature yet."

"It knocks everything else all to pieces. If the other, I mean Miss Merrett, has already discovered the treasure, then this one is either greatly mistaken or is telling a bare-faced untruth."

"That's so. On the other hand, if Miss Athorne tells the truth, then it is pretty good proof that Miss Merrett has not got hold of the money."

"Exactly. But, if the other does know about it, won't she try to get it for her own benefit?"

"I should think it quite likely, sir."

"Then the proper thing for me to do is to have a watchman in that house."

"And you could trust no one so well as yourself. I meant to suggest to you the advantage of your stopping there."

"You think I had better do that?"

"By all means. And, insist upon sleeping in the dining-room. There is a big settee there, I noticed, which would nicely answer the purpose of a bed. Your cousin would hardly raise an objection."

"Not if she's as honest with me as she pretends."

"And even should she object, you might stay in spite of her, I should think, under the circumstances. You have a big interest there, and I imagine you could get a permit from competent authority that would overrule any objection she might raise. But, try other means first."

"It will be known that I'm there."

"Yes, that can't be helped."

"And my presence would be likely to deter any timid ones from searching."

"Yes, and your life would not be wholly safe from the more desperate ones, I must warn you, so you must be armed."

"That's so; but what I was going to say, a woman would hardly venture to make the search, knowing I was there, and so I could gain nothing by being on the spot to watch."

"Your gain would come in protecting your property."

"Quite true; but that property cannot supply my needs if I am never to get hold of it."

"We'll get hold of it. If this girl you have told me about knows as much as she claims to know, there will be a way of getting at it. But, does she say she knows herself where it is?"

"Her last words led me to think she must know. At any rate, she seems to believe she does."

"She will be inclined to sell you out, now, I imagine, for revenge."

"Yes, so I fear. But, have you any suspicion how she can have learned what she knows, Mr. Weston?"

"Yes, and no. A rather uncertain answer to your question, but that is what I mean. It may be known to some other, who has told her, otherwise she is the original discoverer."

"And you can't decide which?"

"I am inclined to favor the first mentioned."

"Then the secret is really not her own, but held by another?"

"Exactly."

"Why do you favor that theory more than the other? Might she not just as well discover it as anybody?"

"No, for her time and opportunity are more limited. The more I think of it the more I am inclined to think the secret is not hers at all. Maybe she was only bluffing you."

"No, I can hardly think that."

"Why?"

"Because, her move was a desperate one; she must have had something to back it with."

"Yes, I thought of that, but, the further I look the more it seems like a bluff, for I do not really believe she possesses this secret at all."

"Well, what is your reason?"

"I'll tell you: I think she knows of some other person who *does* possess it, and whom she thinks she can get it away from."

The door opened, and Ticket entered.

The little Arab stopped short, on seeing a stranger present, and would have backed out again had not Billy detained him.

"Come on, my lad," Billy encouraged. "Did you find out what I sent you to learn?"

"Yes, sir," as the boy came forward, hat in hand.

"Well?"

"Shall I speak right out, sir?"

"Yes, let me have it, for it is in this gentleman's interest."

"Well, the house is the one a lawyer, a Joseph Doorman, lived in, and now his man, Paul Lyddon, lives there."

"Ha! Good enough! You may go now, Ticket, but drop in again at five, when you will find one or both of the boys here, and if there is anything further for you to do they will tell you."

"Yes, sir," and the delighted Arab took his leave.

"My youngest aide, sir," Billy explained to Sherwin. "I feel that my force is now complete. But, have you any idea who the person can be from whom she has learned this secret, if she knows it?"

"Not the slightest."

"How about this man Lyddon?"

"But, he does not know the secret."

"So he says."

"Ah! Do you suspect that he does know it?"

"I suspect that he knows more than he has so far revealed."

"Then he is a contemptible cur and cheat. I can hardly think him so mean, Mr. Weston."

"Let me tell you something, confidentially, of course. Last night there was another masked man in the Penrose residence besides the two I captured."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, the fact," and Billy told him about

the mysterious man whom he had encountered when taking refuge behind the curtain.

"And you have no idea who that man was?" Sherwin asked.

"On the contrary, I have, now. My boy Ticket was on hand when the fellow disappeared through the window, and succeeded in following him to his hole, the address of which he gave me. This morning I sent him to learn who lived there, and you have just heard his report."

"The deuce! Can it be Lyddon?"

"Does it not look so?"

"It certainly does. The knave! I'll go and choke it out of him—"

"You must do nothing of the kind. Leave it all to me, for thus far we have no proof against him, you see."

"But, the boy saw him."

"Not to recognize him; that is, he did not see his face at all. No, we must go slow, and for that reason I have told you about this in confidence. Now to the point. Are Lyddon and Miss Athorne acquainted?"

"Yes, they are; and not only that, but he loves her."

"Ah! Now we are getting at it. The fellow *does* know where it is, and has mentioned it to the young woman, hoping thus to win her."

"If this is so, what a rascal he is! Let us go and see him at once and have it out with him—or not that, of course, but let's go and determine whether or not it is true."

"I will go, with the understanding that you allow me to do the talking."

"Yes, yes, I'll do that; I could not cope with him at all."

"Come right along, then, and we'll see him."

Billy left a brief note for Harry and Seth, and the pair set forth immediately.

Arriving at the lawyer's office, Lyddon received them cordially, making inquiry at once whether anything had been discovered.

"Yes, we think the tin box has been found," said Billy.

The man gave a start, exclaiming:

"You don't say!"

"I ought to have said we suspect it has," Billy modified. "Can you tell us how Miss Merrett came by the means she seems to possess?"

"The money she is using? Why, you are aware, the bank-book was left to her; I suppose she has taken money from the bank."

"We find there has been no money taken from the bank whatever, since the old lady died, sir."

Lyddon looked surprised, making no attempt to conceal it.

"Is that so?" he mused. "Then it is a question, certainly, gentlemen, where her means come from. She had nothing; and I supposed she had drawn heavily upon her aunt's bank account. This is something which should be inquired into, by all means."

"Yes, I shall now make it my business to do that, assured Billy. "Now, Mr. Lyddon, I want your advice as to how I should proceed in another matter."

The lawyer leaned back in his chair, all attention.

CHAPTER X.

SOME FINE FENCING TRIED.

THERE was certainly nothing in the manner of the lawyer to support the suspicion Billy and Sherwin had against him.

He was cool, and his actions were perfectly natural. Sherwin was watching him closely, as was also Billy, though the latter did not appear to be paying him any such attention.

"I know that you are interested in the finding of the hundred thousand dollars left to Mr. Sherwin, Mr. Lyddon," Billy observed as a preface. "That being so, here is something else which cannot fail to inter-

est you, something which I did not mention this morning."

"Yes?"

"There is a certain person who is interested in another way. I met him there last night before the arrest of the two rascals who broke in to steal. The reason I did not speak of this before, I wanted to learn who he was first, and now I have found out. I met him there in a room, behind a curtain, and had a brief tussle with him, in which he overcame me and escaped."

"Well, this is interesting, truly."

Still there was nothing in the manner of the man to support the suspicion, and yet the suspicion amounted almost to proof positive against him.

"Yes," Billy continued, "it is interesting, for it shows that there is going to be a fight for this fortune, hidden as it is. And now the question is: Had this man a clew to the hiding-place of the tin box?"

"Do I understand you to say you know who he is?"

"Yes; I am sure of my man."

"Then why do you not have him arrested, and so nip his game right in the bud?"

"Now that was just what I wanted to see you about. I am a detective, but I am not a lawyer. While I am satisfied that I know my man, I could not *prove* it, and I thought I'd ask your advice about arresting him."

"That changes the whole phase of the matter, sir. A man might rob you, and you might be sure in your own mind who the robber was, but unless you could prove the crime against him there would be little use in your having him arrested. That is just the way it stands here."

"Yes, such was the view I took of it myself. Then you advise against arresting the man?"

"Looking at it as a lawyer, I must so advise."

"But, it would give him some trouble, and it would be likely to deter him from making a further attempt."

"And if you failed to prove anything against him he might make it exceedingly interesting for you afterward. It would be a serious step for you to take, without the positive proof."

"What do you think now, Mr. Sherwin?" and Billy turned to him. "Don't you think we had better not meddle with the man?"

"Yes, that is the sensible course, I suppose," Norman agreed.

"I think so, too. We have been to search the house, Mr. Lyddon, as I told you we intended doing," turning again to the lawyer.

"And with no success, or you would have come here with a different report, I well know. I think it altogether useless to search, without a clue, and I don't know where you are going to get one."

"And it might now be altogether useless to search even with a clue," Billy added.

"Ha! Why so?"

"We have some reason to think the fortune has already been found."

"You can't mean it. This, then, was really your main object in coming here, I take it—that is to say, it is the most important thing you have mentioned."

Billy felt that now he had scored a point against the man, small as it was, but he did not appear to notice the blunder the lawyer had made, or almost made, for he had very skillfully covered his error.

"It is just possible," Billy proceeded to explain, without pause, "that the man who was there last night discovered the tin box and carried it away with him."

"Little good it can do him, if you know who he was, as you claim."

"You think, then, he would not dare to use it?"

"Would he not be a fool to do so, knowing that you have a suspicion against him? But, I hardly think he found it."

Another point scored!
"But, how can he know that I suspect him?" Billy quickly demanded.

"Oh! I understood that he was aware of all that. If such is not the case, and he did get the money, close watching may give you proof sufficient to press the charge against him."

"That will be probably the only way to get at him. Well, we'll be going. Should you learn anything, Mr. Lyddon, don't fail to communicate at once with me or Mr. Sherwin. The slightest point may be of greatest value, you know. A word, sometimes, means a case won."

The lawyer promised, and Billy and his client took their leave.

"What is your opinion?" Billy asked, as they walked away.

"He's innocent; he must be," Sherwin declared. "He didn't turn a hair under your hot fire."

"Well, I don't agree with you, at all. I'm positive, now, that he is the man I grappled with last night behind the curtain; I'm as sure of it as though I had seen his face then."

Sherwin looked amazed.

"I can't understand it at all," he declared.

"Well, you did not pay the attention to details that I did, of course."

"Tell me about it, then. I want to know what it was escaped my notice for I thought I was watchful."

"You could not help noticing that he did not ask who my suspect was."

"That is so, now you remind me of it."

Billy then recounted other little points, which the reader must have noted, and Sherwin was converted to his way of thinking.

"Still," he urged, "all this is only suspicion; there is still the chance that you may be mistaken, Mr. Weston."

"I would admit that, were it not for the proof my little Arab has furnished me."

"That is so; no doubt you are right."

"Now, a word of caution: This man may approach you, skillfully, to get out of you just what I know and what I suspect, and if he does it will be further evidence of his guilt. He is a cool one, and deep, but not so cool and deep that we cannot land him if we are careful about it."

"And you don't want me to let him know any more than you have already given him?"

"That is it exactly."

"But, have you not now put the matter in his hands?"

"How do you mean?"

"Why, if guilty, he knows you suspect him."

"Just what I want! I thought of that, you may be sure. In the first place, he will have to work so extremely cautiously, if he works at all, that his clue can be of little use to him; and then, if he finds I am getting too close for comfort, he may suddenly discover a clue among his dead uncle's papers, you see."

"Then everything depends upon him now?"

"Not everything, but a good deal. There is still Miss Athorne, you know."

So they talked on, till finally they parted, when Billy sought his office and Sherwin took his way to the Penrose mansion.

Miss Merrett greeted her cousin cordially, glad to see him back again so soon, she said.

"Thank you," responded Sherwin, "but this time I have come to ask a favor of you."

"And it will be yours for the asking, I am sure," she rejoined.

"I hope so; and here it is: Will you allow me to lodge here for the present, in order that I may guard the lost treasure?"

"There! I have my wish!"

"Your wish?"

"Yes; I wanted to invite you to do just

this very thing, but felt delicate about doing so, and I wished that you yourself would suggest it. Yes, come and welcome, for it is rightfully your home as well as mine."

"I cannot agree with you in that; there are many other heirs who might set up a similar claim."

"You and I are nearest, remember."

"But this house is yours only; I have no right here save as you permit me to stay. I thank you for the permission you have granted."

"Have you any clue to the hiding-place yet?"

"Not the slightest, Ermina."

"There is one way to find it—the treasure, I mean."

"How is that?"

"By tearing down the house."

"Not to be thought of. Suppose we did not find it, what then?"

"Well, what then? You would know of a certainty that there was no tin box of money here."

"While you, you would be without a house and I could not afford to build you another. No, no, that is not to be thought of."

"It is to be thought of, Norman. I will take the risk myself. You know the ground could be sold at an advance that would more than cover the value of the house, and I could buy another home."

"I had not thought of it in that light; still—"

"There is only one condition to be observed, only one agreement that I would exact from you."

"And what is that?"

"It is a delicate matter, but I will brave it. You know the clause in our aunt's will referring especially to you and me."

"Yes, I recall it."

"Well, if you fail to find your fortune, I want to share mine with you—in the way suggested by our aunt. If you do find it, then I want you to share yours with me, in the same way."

Sherwin was thoughtful before he answered. When he did reply, he evaded an answer by saying he would think about it before deciding. The fact was, he wanted to see Broadway Billy again, for here, he thought, was further proof either for or against Ermina Merrett. And which was it?

He could not decide, but finally he gave her the benefit of the doubt.

CHAPTER XI.

TICKET STRIKES A TRAIL.

MEANTIME Broadway Billy had found his three aides at the office, awaiting his return.

Their chief saw at once, by their faces, that something serious had taken place, but before he had time to inquire Happy Harry cried out:

"Christopher Columbia, boss, we have got the work all to do over again! Our prisoners have 'scaped, and there's the merry dickens to pay in general. Got to dash on our war-paint now, sure enough."

"Which prisoners do you mean?" asked Billy.

"Why, Tony Vangriff and Hugh Higgin, the pair we bagged so neatly last night."

"How did this happen? Seth, you tell me about it, in fewest words."

"Why, they were taking them to the Tombs, when a gang of fellows attacked the police and rescued them, and they all scattered before help could be had, and every one got off."

"How did you find out about this?"

"Ticket saw it all."

"Hal! You again, eh, Ticket? Did the gang seem to be lying in wait for the policemen to come along?"

"I couldn't tell how it was, sir," the Arab answered. "It was done so quick you couldn't tell just how it had happened."

There they was, and then they was gone again."

"It must have been planned, for it could never have been worked so successfully if it hadn't. There will be trouble now, sure enough. But, Ticket, how came you there? What were you doing? You seem to tumble in at the right moment, somehow."

"Why, I went there to git a look at 'em when they took 'em off, that was all, an' when the procession started I fell in behind."

"How many policemen had them in charge?"

"Two."

"And didn't you try to follow either of the fellows?"

"You bet I did, but I got left. A feller tripped me, and down I went, and 'fore I could get goin' again it was too late."

"Well, we have got that work to do over again, Harry, just as you say," Billy observed. "And, too, we have got to look out for squalls, for these fellows may try to do us up."

"You bet they will, if they get a chance."

"And they'll make the chance, if they can. We must hustle and get in our work first. Ticket, you said you had known Vangriff, or something about him; do you know where he hangs up? Or, do you know any of his intimate friends? I've work for you if you do."

"Yes, sir, you bet; both."

"All right, you go where he will be most likely to be seen, and look out for him in disguise. If you see his chums talking, shadow the one you think the most likely to lead you to him."

"Yes, sir."

"All right; now hustle!"

The young Arab was off like a shot, and Billy gave attention to Harry and Seth.

He heard the report of progress they had to make upon another matter, and that done, left them there at the office while he himself went around to the station from which the prisoners had been taken.

"How did it happen, sergeant?" was his immediate question there.

"It was planned, Billy," was the reply.

"A fellow dropped in to see Vangriff, saying he was a lawyer, and that must have been the starting of it."

"No doubt it was. Tony probably told him what was at stake, and directed the scheme. The chief knows about it before this, of course? The officers can't be held to blame."

There were few points to be gleaned here, so Billy's stay was short.

Let us follow Ticket, the Trump.

In all haste he made off to the disreputable saloon where he had once before neatly tricked the rascals.

He had to be as wise as a serpent and keen as a fox, but, being a child of the gutters he was both, and could invent excuses as fast as they might be required.

His attention was drawn to a man with whom he had seen Tony in company, on other occasions, who was talking to a group of four or five others at one of the tables with which the place was fitted.

Ticket cast about him for a scheme whereby he might overhear.

A plan came to him quickly, and immediately he acted.

The saloon boasted a free-lunch counter, and the tempting tid-bits were arrayed on a table just behind the one at which these men were seated. If he stepped up and ate they could hardly suspect him.

But, a great difficulty had to be surmounted; how could he reconcile the proprietor?

It was daytime, remember, and the saloon was not crowded.

It looked like an impossibility, at first sight, but Ticket's bump of invention was quite well developed and the idea came quickly.

The bar had sighted him, and was looking at him questioningly; then acting upon his plan the young Arab stepped up to the bar.

He had to stand on tiptoes to see over.

"Well, what do you want?" the barkeeper demanded.

"Please, sir, I'm orful hungry," Ticket answered, in a timid voice.

The man laughed roughly. "Well, I can't help that, can I?" he retorted.

"I could, though, sir, if you'd only let me git at that lunch-table."

"I don't doubt it; but, I won't, so you may as well git right out of here at once. That's only fer customers."

"That's it, an' it ain't no fair. A big duffer comes in an' takes a man-o'-war of beer fer five cents, an' then he fills in forty-five cents' worth of grub an' it's all right."

"Well, you hit it close, fer sure; that's what some does."

"An' I say it ain't no fair. I don't want none of yer beer, but here's five cents fer a taste of grub, an' I must have it."

With that Ticket flipped a nickel on the bar and darted away to the lunch without waiting to hear what the proprietor might have to say about it, but that worthy only smiled and said nothing.

Time had been lost, Ticket felt, but on the other hand time and much else besides had been gained.

With ears wide open the Arab listened while he attacked the viands.

"Yes, and he's goin' to git even w' that Broadway Billy, you kin bet," he caught first, and it was Tony's friend who spoke.

"He's a right ter, I should say," another growled. "He'd orter murder him an' his helpers together, curse 'em!"

"He'll do it, don't you never fear; he's swore'd he'll fix 'em out fer it, an' he means it, too."

At that moment another man joined those at the table, and he was eagerly welcomed.

This fellow cast a suspicious look at Ticket, but that was all.

"What's the word?" questioned Vangriff's friend. "Did ye see Van? What does he have ter say 'bout it?"

"Yes, I found him where you said, an' he's ragin' I tell ye. Has ter lay low fer fear he'll git took. He's trusted it to me, till dark, an' then he'll be with us."

"Not here, though?"

"No; he's safe where he is, and won't stir from there. I'm goin' to take the thing in hand now and git p'int, and then I'll see Tony and together we'll hatch a plan that won't miss fire."

At that moment the man at the bar called out to Ticket.

"Here, now, boy," he shouted, "you have had your money's worth, and more, so s'pose you just take a quiet sneak."

There was no help for it; there was no excuse Ticket could offer now that would not bring suspicion upon him, for all the men at the table had turned to look at him.

"All right, sir," he answered promptly, grabbing a final portion with each hand, "I'm off."

"You talked about big duffers gorgin' forty-five cents' worth," the man commented; "I never seen one lay it away like you did in my life."

"Had ter do it," the Arab responded. "Expected every second you'd choke me off an' I went in fer all I could git before you choked. See?"

The men all laughed, the man at the bar with them, and Ticket went out.

"Jupety Jupet!" he exclaimed to himself, as soon as outside, "but I wish Broadway Billy was here, or Harry, or Seth, I wouldn't care which; it's bigger'n I kin handle, that's a sure thing. Now if I was only what Broadway Billy was when he was a kid, I'd be of some use; but, but I ain't, an' so I ain't."

He was thoughtful as he walked a little

distance away, and when presently he stopped and looked back he said further:

"By Jupet! I can't git out of it; I've got to tackle it. No use thinkin' of goin' to tell the boss, fer I can't be spared here. He'd box my ears if I dropped this clue, when it's so ripe an' promisin'. Must win the confidence of Broadway Billy somehow, and here's as good a chance as I'll ever git, if I don't make a flunk of it. Let's see, where did I leave off thinkin'?"

He scratched his head.

"Yes, he's the man I must hitch to, sure enough. He is the one who knows where Tony is hidin', an' if I drop him I lose the hull thing. It ain't to be thought of, Ticket. You have got to do somethin' now if ye ever did. You are on trial, an' it is now or never—most likely it's goin' to be never, anyhow, but that won't be your fault if you try hard. Let's see: this feller is to gather up p'int, then he is to see Tony, and then they are goin' to hatch a plan, are they? Plan fer what? Plan fer puttin' Broadway Billy—Well, not if I know it!"

The little fellow ended with that, as firmly as a man might have made the decision.

Waiting near the saloon, but taking care to keep out of sight as much as possible, following such points as he had gathered from reading about his patron prototype and such instructions as he had received personally since he had come to know him, he finally had the satisfaction of seeing his man come forth, alone; and then it was that Ticket entered boldly upon a task that was to be the real test of his worthiness for the place he coveted in the confidence of Broadway Billy.

CHAPTER XII.

BILLY LEARNS SOMETHING.

The day was waning when finally Broadway Billy got around to call at the Penrose mansion.

This time he was alone, and the door was opened to him by the big colored footman, Washington Jackson Snipe.

"Well, Jack, how is everything?" the detective asked.

"Oh, bully," was the response.

"Had no more housebreakers here, eh?"

"No, sah."

"You want to look out for them to-night, then, for they may come in force."

"Sakes alive! Am dat so? Hadn't we better have de police on hand in force jes' de same, to meet 'em wid?"

"I'll attend to that part of it, Jack."

"But, who am comin'?"

"Why, the fellows we caught last night have escaped, and it may be they will try it again. I believe Mr. Sherwin is going to stay here; have you heard anything about it?"

"Yes, dat am de plan, sah. He is to sleep down in de dinin'-room, sah."

"That is a good idea, for no one is so good a watchman as the owner himself, you know. I don't believe your ghosts will be so numerous, do you?"

"Mebby not, sah, mebbby not," with a grin.

"Well, tell your mistress I desire to see her."

In due time Miss Merrett came down to the reception-room.

"Another official visit?" she cheerfully greeted. "Pray what is it this time, Sir Detective?"

Billy's manner was very cold, and ere she ceased speaking a slight pallor had come over the young woman's face.

"A serious question is coming up, Miss Merret," he made answer, "and it is concerning that I have called. There may be trouble ahead for you."

"For me?"

She was now pale indeed.

"Yes."

"But, Mr. Weston, I have done nothing

that could bring me into trouble; I am at loss to understand what you are coming at. Please do not keep me in suspense, for I can stand anything better than that."

"Well, I will come right to the point, then: I have had a talk with Mr. Lyddon, about the whole affair, and I asked him where your means came from."

The young woman showed nervousness, striving eagerly to conceal it, as the keen-eyed detective thought.

"That is something he could well answer, sir," she said.

"He could not answer it at all."

"I cannot understand that. He knows what my aunt's will was, that this house and all in it should be mine, to say nothing about her jewelry and bank-book."

"Her diamonds, perhaps, were quite valuable, and you may have disposed of them. Mind you, I am not pressing you in this matter, but trying to give you the chance to escape a serious charge."

"A serious charge?"

"You may come to be accused of finding the tin box belonging to Mr. Sherwin."

The young woman now laughed, and her face brightened up. She did not appear to look upon this as serious.

"That is impossible, sir," she said. "Mr. Sherwin knows very well that did I know where it was I would be the first to bring it to him. But, I do not know."

"Yet it appears that you have been spending a considerable of money since you took possession here, while you have taken nothing out of the bank. Have you any objection to telling me where it comes from?"

"Sir, that is none of your business."

A tinge of red now came into her face, and her eyes snapped.

"Very well," Billy coolly rejoined, "perhaps it is not, but I should hate to see you arrested."

"When you get proof that I have found the box, Mr. Weston, arrest me; until then I know you dare not do so. But, I tell you candidly I have not found it."

"Then why not tell me as candidly where your means come from, so that I can defend you if the charge is made?"

"Do you mean to say you would defend me?"

"Yes, if you can satisfy me that you are innocent of deception in the matter."

"I might easily do that, but I do not know whether I ought to trust you or not, Mr. Weston. Would you keep a secret for me?"

"If it did not conflict with my duty to Mr. Sherwin."

"Then you are all for him."

"I am for him first."

"Have you seen him recently?"

"Not since early in the afternoon."

"Then certainly not since he was here?"

"No."

"Well, he could now tell you of a proposition I have made to him. I will tell you what it was."

"You may do so, if you desire."

"I will, to set myself right in your eyes. I proposed tearing this house down to find his treasure. I know of no other way, Mr. Weston."

"And then you would be without a house, if you failed to find it."

"Yes, but the ground has so increased in value since this house was built that I could sell it and well afford to buy another elsewhere."

"And if you do not find the treasure, what then?"

"Well, the condition was, to speak plainly, that Norman should marry me, as our aunt desired."

"Ha! I thought it could not be without some condition. What did he decide?"

"He is going to think about it before he decides. Now, making him an offer like

that, does it look as though I have found the money and am keeping it from him? I assure you such is not the case."

"There is, I believe, a serious impediment in the way."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"He loves another."

"Oh! is that all? I guess he could transfer his affection if he wanted to. I don't know what love is, but I think I can have as much regard for Norman as for any one, by trying."

"Then it's a matter of business with you."

"I am willing to carry out my dead aunt's wishes in the matter."

"Well, we have drifted from the point. You asked me if I could keep a secret, when I pressed you to tell me where your means come from. I do not want to suspect you of deception in this matter, Miss Merrett."

"But you do, nevertheless?"

"No; but I shall be obliged to suspect you, unless you clear yourself."

"Well, I will tell you. This house and all it contained were willed to me, so why should I hesitate?"

"I don't know why you should. If you have found anything, excepting the tin box, it certainly belongs to you, so there is no need for you to be secret about it."

"That is so, isn't it?"

"Assuredly."

"Well, come with me."

She rose abruptly and led the way from the room.

Billy followed her, and was conducted down to the basement floor and into the dining-room.

"Sit down, please," she here invited him. "I will show you a discovery I made in this room, and one which paid me well, too."

Billy took a seat and waited for developments. They were alone together in the room, and the young woman closed all the doors which happened to be open.

"I knew," she then remarked, "that my aunt had some money hidden in this room, and once I happened by chance to discover her in the act of closing and locking the secret hiding-place."

Billy nodded.

"That was before she was taken down sick, sir. I used to stay with her sometimes. Old Betsy and myself discovered her one night as I said, and I tried to fix in my mind the location of the secret drawer. I thought I could do it, and I was not mistaken."

"And it is there in the chimney?" Billy guessed.

"How did you know that?" quickly.

"I do not say I know it, I'm merely making a guess at it."

"Well, you have guessed pretty close, then, for there is where it is, as I will now show you."

Billy could easily guess this, for he had seen Betsy Bennet trying to find the same hiding-place, and he was not a little disappointed, for he had hoped here to find the treasure.

The young woman stepped to the broad, solid-looking chimney-place, and ran her hand over its carved and inlaid face above the low mantel, till presently she found the spot she desired, when she turned to the detective, saying:

"You see where my hand is!"

"Certainly."

"Well, here is the secret drawer, though no one could ever suspect it without having some previous knowledge of its existence. You could never guess how to open it, now could you?"

Billy stepped forward to examine closely.

He had to admit that there was a drawer there it was artfully made, and he certainly could not suggest how to open it.

"Nor could I, if I had not seen my aunt close it," said Miss Merrett. "You will understand that I did not mean to be dishonest with her, but when I came into possession of the house I had then the right to explore it."

"Assuredly, Miss Merrett."

"Well, it is opened in this manner. Take notice where I place my feet, on these two stones here in the hearth, see? Then I press so with this heel, and there is the drawer, now open."

True enough, as she pressed with her heel on the spot indicated, a drawer opened in the carving of the chimney.

Billy quickly looked into it, noting that it was now empty.

"What did you find here?" he asked.

"Some money, sir, about two thousand dollars in all. Now you know where my means came from; are you satisfied?"

"I ought to be, certainly, Miss Merrett. Pray close the drawer again, and do not let the secret be known to another soul, not even to Sherwin himself. I have a reason for asking this favor."

"Very well, sir, I will do as you say," and she closed the drawer and they returned to the room above, and a little later Billy took his leave.

CHAPTER XIII.

A VERY PRETTY SCHEME.

IRENE ATHORNE, since her interview with Norman Sherwin, had done some hard thinking.

"I'll do it," she finally decided, most firmly. "I'd be a fool to throw such a chance away, no matter if I do love Norman."

Such a decision had not been reached in a moment.

It was the outcome of careful study, looking at the matter from every point of view, and figuring well her own interest. If she could not marry for love and money together, she would venture all for money.

Nor was this all. She felt that Norman Sherwin had scorned her, and that she had been humiliated beyond all bounds. Since he had so despised her offer, she would seek to do all she could against him. If she could keep his fortune away from him, so that he could not share it with her rival, she would do it, no matter at what cost.

"Yes, I would be a fool indeed," she told herself. "There is no hope that I can ever win him, but I can have revenge upon him. Lyddon certainly meant something in coming to me as he did, and I could not blame him for not speaking out. He could not trust me. He knows where Norman's money is, and wants me to share it with him. Yes, I should be a fool indeed to throw away any such chance as that."

Less than an hour later she was at the office of Lawyer Lyddon.

"Ah! this is a pleasurable surprise, Irene," she was greeted; and the young lawyer rose and held out both his hands toward her.

"But I have come on business, Paul," she responded, smiling, as she gave her hands. "Lawyers are not supposed to receive ladies into their offices upon any other pretext, are they?"

"Then your plea of business is only a pretext?"

"Oh, no; I mean business, I assure you—There, now, no need to laugh, for I have said nothing slangy."

A few more such remarks, while Lyddon was providing a seat for her in a suitable place, and when he threw himself into his office chair, he said:

"Well, now, I'm ready for the business in hand, Irene. I can imagine what has brought you, but I hardly dare hope even yet. Go ahead, now, and let me know my fate."

"You have a good deal of assurance."

"Oh, no, you mistake; I have none. Don't I say I hardly dare hope?"

"Well, I will come to it without delay, then. I have decided to answer favorably to your question."

"Bless you! You cannot imagine how great pleasure your answer gives me, my darling. But, do not look at me so coldly as that I beg. Can you not warm up a little?"

"Business first, you know. Did I not say I have come on business?"

"Yes, but— Well, business first, then. Say on."

"I have decided to give you a favorable answer, on condition."

"Name your condition, then."

"That you take me into your confidence fully."

"Which I am only too willing to do, as I have told you before."

"Let us not talk at cross-purposes now, Paul. You hinted at something this morning."

"Well, maybe I did. I do not admit it, but I think it's safe to say you are more than half-right in what you surmise, loved one."

"Well, tell me everything, Paul, and I'll be your wife."

"You mean that?"

"I do."

"Enough said, then. You are right in what you suspect—I don't even ask you what you suspect, you see, but guess at it."

"Yes, but I want you to tell me everything in particular. Now I am frank with you and I want you to be the same with me. I don't love you, but if I marry you I'll be true and faithful."

"That's all I can ask, as a starter. I'll be frank with you, certainly. But, when is this happy event to take place?"

"Whenever you please."

"Then it will take place immediately, this very hour. Come, I will lock up and we'll go right to a rector not far from here—"

"Good heavens! So sudden?"

"Why not? If you mean business, so do I,

and I need your help badly in a certain matter which will be the greatest benefit to us both."

Their eyes met, and the woman looked at him long and searchingly.

"I'll do it," she fully decided. "I came here with that intention, and I do not see why I need hesitate. I can marry you as well now as I can a month hence. I will go."

"Thank you. You will not regret it."

Lawyer Lyddon brushed himself up a little, and when he was ready the pair went forth upon their serious errand.

Their destination was not far away, they found the rector in his study, and in a little while Paul Lyddon and Irene Athorne were married hard and fast.

"This is, for me, a happy day," Lyddon whispered, as he came forth with his wife upon his arm. "I hope it will mark the beginning of happiness for you, too, my darling."

"I hope it will, sincerely, since now the step has been taken."

"You know that we have both taken the step with eyes wide open, and you know the promise was 'for better or for worse.'"

"Yes."

"Hence, it all rests with us. I know that you love Sherwin, and that your only reason for marrying me was to revenge yourself against him by aiding to cheat him out of his fortune."

"Paul!"

"You see I dare trust you now. My only reason for marrying you was that I loved you. There is the whole matter, and the step has been taken. If you can get hold of that hundred thousand, it will be the very grandest triumph you could wish for. We must get it."

"Then you do hold the secret?"

"I do."

"I was sure of it. But, when and how are we going to get it?"

"Can you not do it this very night? It must be done quickly or it will be forever too late. I have tried it, but missed."

"There is danger in it."

"It is worth the risk. I always thought I was tolerably honest, Irene, but this temptation has proved too great. I must have that hundred thousand dollars if it is possible to get it."

"Yes, we must have it, that's true. Not only for sake of the money, but for the revenge it will give me."

"Can you not go and spend the night with Ermina Merrett?"

"I might, I suppose."

"And in the night you can get up and find the money and bring it away with you on the morrow."

"If I do not get caught in the act."

"You must take care on that point. There will be danger, of course, but when you think what is at stake it will nerve you. And there is a difficulty I must name, but one which I will remove if I can."

"What is that?"

"Norman Sherwin is going to take up his abode there for the present."

"Then I may as well remain away, for he will be watchful, no doubt, and will give me no chance."

"I will strive somehow to hinder his being there to-night. But, even if he is, the treasure will be found in the dining-room and he is not likely to spend the night there."

"In the dining-room?"

"Yes. Wait till we come to the office and I'll explain where it is and how you can get at it."

They talked on, confidentially, till they were once more in the office.

Here, when Lyddon had closed the door, some papers were taken out of the safe, and among them was a drawing.

"This is the plan," he explained. "In the chimney-place, over the mantel, is a small secret drawer, and here is the explanation how to open it."

"Wonderful!"

"You see these stones represented in the hearth? Well, you will find two of them slightly marked, as they appear here. No one would suspect anything, looking at them, but here is the key to the secret drawer, according to this."

"It seems like a bit of romance."

"I hope there will be a good deal of reality about it before we are done, my dear."

"But, how do I open the drawer?"

"Simply by placing your heels upon these two stones and pressing upon this one. The drawer will fly open, so it says, and there will be the treasure, right under your thumb."

"But, I shall be seen taking it away."

"No, that need not follow. That will be the

easiest part of it all. You can carry a small loose bundle with you when you go there, and bring the tin box away in it."

Lyddon spoke earnestly and impressively, and his bride's eyes flashed.

"I will do it, Paul," she said firmly. "I will do it if I have to spend a month in that house to accomplish the object. We can afford to take our time about it, can we not?"

"By no means. There is an accursed detective at work, and there is no knowing when he may stumble upon the right clue. You must outwit him and get in your fine work first. After that we can laugh at them all while we are enjoying life at their expense."

"And this was what you wanted me to do when you first asked me to wed you?"

"Not at all. I thought then I should be able to get it myself, and loving you, I wanted to share it with you."

"But now you cannot attempt it?"

"I came within a hair's breadth of getting in a trap there last night. Only for that accursed Broadway Billy I should have the treasure here in my safe this minute. It would be too unhealthy for me to attempt it again, after the arrests that were made there last night."

"You were not with those robbers?"

"Not by any means; I was alone. But, come, let us go and enjoy our first meal together, and we can plan further while we eat. Even if we fail to get this great fortune, we can still be happy."

CHAPTER XIV.

A TRAP DOUBLY SET.

TICKET, the Trump, had a harder task before him than he had calculated upon at the beginning.

He followed his man with a persistence that was admirable, inventing numerous petty schemes as occasion required for hearing what he had to say to those with whom he talked.

First of all he located the hiding-place of Tony Vangriff, and there good fortune had particularly favored him, for he had been able to hear everything that was said between the two rascals. They had quite a talk together, after which Tony's friend set to work.

The object of it all was to lay a trap to catch Broadway Billy and his pair of ferrets first, and then to make another effort to get at the hidden fortune in the Penrose mansion.

The latter was considered dangerous, but the amount of money was a great temptation and they could afford to take big risks.

Besides, it was planned now to go in considerable force.

Ticket wanted to get time to go and warn his patron of what was going on, but his suspect kept him constantly on the move and there was no opportunity given.

The boy felt that the most important thing for him to do was to keep the man in sight and learn all he could, and then to hear the plans which he and Vangriff were finally to arrange.

So passed the afternoon, and it was night before Tony's friend, Bowers by name, got around again to the place of concealment.

The Trump was close after him, and was speedily at his post of vantage.

"Well, what luck, Bowers?" he heard Tony ask.

"Best o' luck," was the response. "I think ther game is right in our own hands, now, if we work it well and nothin' bu'sts."

"What's your idea?"

"To go for them cussed detectives first of all."

"Certainly; but, how will you do it? That is what I am trying to get out of you."

"Well, I'll give you the idee that's worked inter my mind, Van, but of course you will have ter do the polishin'. You kin beat me at ther fine work."

"All right, what is it?"

"We must go there to-night, make every livin' critter in the house prisoner, an' then go through the ranch like a pack o' foxes till we find what we're lookin' fer. Do ye see?"

"Yes, that is my idea, too; but, first let's settle about the detectives."

"Ter be sure. That was what I was comin' at. It seems young Sherwin has took up his abode in that house ter watch his treasure, an'—"

"The deuce he has!"

"Zactly; an' he will be a hard tooth ter pull before we kin git ter work. But, we'll be strong enough ter fix him out if he goes on cuttin' up any of his monkey tricks."

"We must do it, at any cost short of killing him."

"Ef he gets killed it will be his own fault. But, that ain't what I was comin' at yet."

Broadway Billy knows that he is there, and somehow they expect ter work together in the matter, so we must play a trick on ther detective and lead him into a trap and do him up."

"Using Sherwin's name to decoy him?"

"You have guessed it, first crack. I have been over the ground and got the lay of the land, and I have got it all mapped out in my mind in the rough."

"Well let me have your scheme."

"It's jest this: Send a note ter that detective feller, signed by Sherwin, tellin' him to come with his boys at a certain hour and come to the house by the rear alley from the back street. We'll be there to nab 'em and have it all fixed to carry 'em off double quick."

"Carry them where to?"

"Bring 'em here as well as not and put 'em in an empty room."

"They'll be sure to get out."

"Not in a hurry they won't. One can stay to guard 'em while the rest are at work, an' as soon as we git ther boodle and git away we don't care."

"If it wasn't for the greater risk it would be a good deal better to put 'em out of the way for good."

"And I'm fer doin' that, if you are willin'."

"No, no, that mustn't be talked of. We'll put 'em here so safe they won't get away till help comes, though, and that may be some days. While they are here we'll be making good our escape."

"Then you 'gree with my plan?"

"Yes, certainly; all it lacks is the filling out in detail."

"And that's fer you ter do."

Enough. Their hateful plot was fully arranged, and when they went forth, finally, it was to carry it out.

"Jupety Jupel!" exclaimed Ticket, as he followed them, his mind troubled. "I have got a bigger load o' mystery 'n I kin carry in both arms, an' what be I goin' ter do with it? Wish I could fall in with the boss, or Harry, or Seth."

He could now safely leave these rascals, but what would be the use of doing that since he did not know where to find Broadway Billy?

The office was closed, and he did not know Billy's private address, and hence could not reach him.

His only way, therefore, was to stick to the suspects.

"That's my holt, by Jupel!" he decided.

"When they send that decoy note I'll foller the chap that takes it, and if he finds the boss so will I, and there will be a fancy oil polish put on somewhere, I'm bettin. Think this is the best plan, anyhow. Guess we'll git thar, Eli, if our wind holds out."

Vangriff was in something of a disguise, and avoiding places where he was best known he and Bowers led their youthful shadower off into a strange quarter of the city.

Their destination was finally reached, and there were found four or five fellows of like stripe, among them Hugh Higgin.

Fortune again favored Ticket and he heard what was said.

"You're sure you know where he lives?"

Tony demanded of one of the fellows.

"Sure," the disdainful response. "Didn't Bowers set me to find out? I done it, you bet. I know where he is when he's home."

"Well, dare you take the note?"

"Certain."

"All right, that's all that needs be said about it, then. I'll fix it up and you can be off with it."

Much more was said, all around, but this was the essential part for Ticket, and from that moment the fellow who was to carry the message was his especial subject or suspect.

When the man left the place of rendezvous the young Arab was not far behind, and Ticket did not once lose sight of his man.

The boy was fast getting onto the trick of this part of detective duty.

The fellow had told no untruth in declaring he knew where Broadway Billy resided, for he went straight there, and was just in time to see the peerless young detective enter the house.

He hastened forward, rung, entered, and in due time came forth again and went away.

Allowing him to get out of sight, Ticket rung the bell.

It will be remembered that Billy still lived with his mother, Mrs. Watts, and that the family occupied a comfortable flat.

Ticket was not tall enough to put his mouth to the tube in the hall, to respond to the call that came down from above, but he shouted his name in a loud voice and the door promptly opened.

Billy met him at the head of the stairs.

"How did you know where to find me, Ticket?" he asked.

"Followed that chump," the boy promptly answered. "He's a fraud."

"Is it possible? Then he successfully deceived me, for I was suspicious and questioned him closely. But, come in."

Ticket was taken into the rooms and introduced, and that done, Billy began to question him to learn what had brought him there and what he knew, and Ticket speedily unfolded his tale.

"Ticket, your are a trump in deed indeed!" cried Billy, when he had heard all. "You needn't go any further to win my confidence, for you have won it already. Only for you we might have got into a serious fix, or at any rate would have had something of a squabble to escape it, but now we are on the winning side sure."

Ticket was so proud he could hardly speak.

"Glad to hear ye say it—that I'm some good, boss," he managed to say. "I went in to win, anyhow, an' I'm glad I have. But, what do you want me ter do now? I want to be doin' my share, now that I'm in it. If there ain't nothin' I kin do, let me go with ye, fer I want to see the fun and have a hand in it. The little I have had makes me hungry fer more."

"I'll tell you what you can do, and you will then be on hand to see the fun when it is ripe. Go back and keep an eye on Tony Vangriff, and should he escape when we spring the trap you must not lose sight of him but follow him to his hole."

"All right, Broadway Billy, I'll do it; you kin trust me if I am little. If I have won yer confidence, as you say, I'm goin' to try hard to keep it, you bet."

Ticket having recited to his chief all he had heard, with that accuracy for which he was already famous, he now took his leave and made haste to get back again to the place where the rascals were gathered.

He made his little legs fly, and had the satisfaction of arriving in time to see the man he had followed reach the place just ahead of him.

Ticket quickly got where he could see and hear.

"Well, what word?" demanded Vangriff.

"He's played fer a sucker, fine," was the smiling response.

"You think he bit, then, do you?"

"I know it. He swallowed hook, line an sinker, an' even wanted ter gulp down the pole too."

The fellow then told how cleverly he had played his part, and he did not have to draw upon his imagination any, either; and when he had done, was highly complimented.

Success for their scheme seemed now assured, and they drank to each other's health all around.

They only waited for time, now, and finally all rose to go.

Ticket fell in with the procession, as rear guard, fully determined to carry out his part of the work.

The men did not go far in company, but separated and went different ways, but the Trump did not for a moment lose sight of Tony Vangriff, though more than once he had to use his wits to escape detection.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CLEVER TRAPPERS TRAPPED.

IRENE ATHORNE, or now Mrs. Paul Lyddon, cleverly carried her point and got herself invited to remain all night in the Penrose mansion.

This was the first and the important step toward success. Having gained this, she had little doubt but the rest would be easy. Whether easy or otherwise, she was determined to succeed.

The chief obstacle in the way was Norman Sherwin, but Lyddon had promised to remove him for the night if possible to accomplish it.

Ermina Merrett was in the reception-room with her guests when there came a caller to see Sherwin.

The colored footman brought in his card and delivered it.

"A stranger to me," Sherwin remarked as he glanced at the name. "With your leave, Miss Merrett, I will step into the hall and see the gentleman."

"You may invite him in here if you wish," the mistress of the mansion made haste to say.

"Thank you, but I will see him first," the rejoinder.

With that Sherwin went out into the hall, where he found a dark man with a full beard awaiting him.

"You desired to see me, sir?" he added.

"In private, if you please," the man responded.

Sherwin had never seen him before in his life, so far as he could tell.

"You are a stranger to me, I think, sir," he said. "You may speak here, or I will take you up to my room."

"I prefer the latter, since what I have to say will occupy several minutes, perhaps, and is highly important. Please glance at this, Mr. Sherwin."

The caller had now stepped nearer, and he held out a card.

On it was the name—Broadway Billy.

Sherwin looked again at his visitor, and was puzzled even yet to recognize him, so clever was the disguise.

He understood what was required of him, however.

"Very well, we will go up to my room, then," he invited. "Please come this way."

Miss Merrett had assigned a room to his use, even though he had expressed his intention of sleeping in the dining-room below.

As soon as they entered the room and the door had been closed, Sherwin said:

"I'd never have guessed it was you. I wouldn't have believed you could make such a change in your appearance, Weston."

"Seeing is believing, however," Billy responded, for he it was. "What I am here for is important, and my business must be done quickly. Where is Miss Merrett?"

"She is in the parlor with Miss Athorne."

"Ha! Miss Athorne, eh? I think I smell a mice. But, this is no time for idle talk. I want to get into Miss Merrett's private room for about a couple of minutes. Can't stop to explain, but it's all in your interest. Can you show me where it is?"

"Yes; but—"

"No time to but, Mr. Sherwin. Show me the room, quickly, and ask no questions till I return."

"All right, knowing who you are, I'll do it."

He opened the door and stepped out into the hall, and noting that the way was clear, motioned the detective to follow.

Passing around an angle made by the stairway where it turned to ascend to the next floor in another direction, Sherwin pointed to a door, saying:

"There, that is the room."

"All right. Step back to your own room, and keep up a talking in low tone as if I were still there with you."

They parted and the detective went forward upon his mysterious errand while Sherwin returned and carried out the directions which had been given.

He had not long to wait. Not more than two minutes had passed when the detective again entered the room.

"Successful," Billy said only.

"What have you accomplished?" Sherwin inquired.

"Found a clue at last," was the reply. "Say nothing, but wait. And now I must be going. Have you been able to secure the key, as agreed upon?"

"Yes, and here it is. It will let you in at the front door. Do not fail to come, if it is as important as you think."

"I shall be on hand, never fear."

A few other remarks and the detective took his leave, Sherwin returning to the room where he had left the two women, where he gave a simple but apparently satisfactory account of his caller.

It was not an hour later when a messenger came to the house bearing a message for Sherwin.

It read like this:

"SHERWIN:—

"Come immediately to office."

"WESTON—BROADWAY BILLY."

The young man pulled at his mustache in a puzzled manner for a moment, thinking hard, and finally decided to obey the call. He partly suspected that something was not right about the message, but it was so brief and to the point that he felt bound to obey the summons.

"You ladies will have to excuse me," he said, briefly explaining.

It was impossible for Irene to conceal the exultation she felt, for she knew this was the work of her husband. There was nothing, now, in the way of her success. A little patience, a little careful work, and she should have in her possession that immense fortune.

Sherwin had expressed his intention of returning, but none knew so well as Irene that the

chances against his doing so were large. He knew the importance of keeping watch while she was beneath that roof, for he guessed what had brought her there. She was not likely to make any search for the treasure, however, until after Ermina had retired.

He expected to be back ere that time.

When he left the house, a silent shadower—the Silent Shadower, to make clear at once—set forth after him, keeping him in sight.

Sherwin had not gone a great distance when, in a dark place, several men suddenly closed upon him and he was made prisoner. A carriage was near at hand, and into that he was forced and driven rapidly away.

Silent Seth had run forward, on the other side of the street, and turning the corner just a moment after the vehicle had turned, he caught on behind and swung himself up to a position where he could hold fast, and one in which he might not be discovered readily.

In the mean time Happy Harry had been set to watch the movements of Lawyer Lyddon, and had followed him finally to a house which did not appear to have any family living in it.

Here the lawyer let himself in with a key, and there he remained, while Harry watched, and no light was seen at any of the windows.

It was a considerable time later when a carriage drew up before this house.

Harry noticed somebody drop from behind as the carriage drew to a stop, and he saw him spring to cover behind a tree. And none too soon, either, for the door opened immediately and men got out.

There was a moment of parley, when a limp and helpless—if not indeed lifeless body was taken out and carried into the house, while the carriage drove away.

Harry crossed the street and approached the tree behind which he had seen the other watcher hide himself.

"Christopher Columbus!" cried Harry, as soon as he saw it was Silent Seth.

"What are you doing here?" Seth asked.

"My man is in that house. Who was the one they just took in?"

"That was Sherwin, the boss's client. It's gettin' lively, Harry, sure as you live."

"You bet it is, and there's going to be music in the air before morning, or I'm no prophet. But, what are we going to do? Must be up and bustling, these times."

They talked on, agreeing that it was better to wait till the men came out, when one might still follow Lyddon while the other could try to rescue the man they had taken into the house.

After a little delay the men all came out together, and the door was locked after them.

Lyddon went off in one direction while the other men took another.

Harry followed Lyddon, as before, while Silent Seth remained to see what he could do toward freeing the prisoner.

Meanwhile Ticket had been faithful in his part.

He had not lost sight of Tony Vangriff for a minute, and now was close to him on the street in the rear of the Penrose mansion.

A considerable time had passed, and it was nearing the hour for the arrival of Broadway Billy, in response to the bogus message from Sherwin, which they had every reason to believe he would obey.

Finally the rascals were all assembled again, and knowing their plan, Ticket did not take the risk of venturing near enough to hear what was said.

At length they entered the narrow alley in a body, and no one who had not seen them could suspect that they were there.

The note purporting to be from Sherwin had directed Broadway Billy to come to the house at a certain hour, by way of the alley, and now that time was about at hand and he was looked for.

A few minutes passed, and Broadway Billy came.

But he was not alone. Half a dozen sturdy policemen were with him, and they entered the alley in a body.

The next moment there was a sound of hasty steps, then a sharp scuffle and a commingling of oaths, and a light flashed upon the scene from a lantern in the hand of Broadway Billy.

"Trapped!" cried Tony Vangriff.

"And by the very dog we wanted ter capture!" added Hugh Higgin.

"Curse you, Broadway Billy, but you shall pay for this! At them, boys, tooth and nail!"

The rascals fought desperately, but the policemen had the advantage and they were speedily brought to terms and taken prisoners.

"Jupety Jupel!" cried a small voice from the

rear, "but that was fine! Makes me feel almost as good as hot soup on a cold day. Broadway Billy is the boss, you bet he is!"

The prisoners stormed and threatened, but that harmed no one, and presently they were marched out of the alley and away to the station, where Broadway Billy entered charges against them, and where we may leave them for good. Vangriff and Higgin did not escape a second time.

That duty done, Billy set out for the Penrose mansion, having told Ticket he could approach by way of the rear alley, where he might possibly witness some more of the same kind of "fun" before morning.

CHAPTER XVI.

TICKET, THE TRUMP, KNIGHTED.

THE hour was growing late by the time Broadway Billy reached the house, and he had not a great while to wait for all the lights to be put out.

Waiting yet a little longer, the detective crossed the street and let himself in by the front basement door with the key which had been provided by Sherwin, and knowing the ground well, he was quite at home in the dark.

Closing the door as silently as he had opened it, and locking it, he passed noiselessly into the dining-room, where he stepped into a recess behind a *portiere*, a hiding-place which he had previously marked. The *portiere* covered a false door, and was seldom moved.

An hour passed.

Finally a slight noise was heard, then a faint light was seen, and looking out from his place of concealment Billy saw the old servant, Betsy Bennet!

She put her light on the table with a sigh, and the watching detective heard her mutter:

"I must find it now or give it up for good and all. This will be my last chance. But, I'll never tell them, I'll never tell them. They have got no more right to it than I have, who was her friend till death."

She began and went through the same performance as on the other occasion, going over the front of the chimney-place time and time again, but without success. She touched the secret drawer a hundred times; but, without the knowledge of how to open it her search was in vain.

At last, with another sigh, she gave up.

"I can't find it," she muttered. "I know it is there, but I do not know how to open it. Well, well, if I can't have it neither shall they, that is all. Betsy Bennet will keep her secret, and it shall die with her the same as it died with the old lawyer. Ha, ha, ha!"

With a chuckle she turned her light low and made her way out of the room as silently as she had come, the creaking of a joint now and then being the only sound she made.

Two hours more passed silently by, the detective still waiting patiently in his hiding-place. At last a very faint click caught his ear, and a little later light was seen.

He looked out, and there was Irene Athorne, lighting the gas. She left it turned low, or only just high enough to enable her to see distinctly.

Taking a paper from her pocket she looked at it long and carefully for some moments, when she laid it on the table and stepped to the chimney-place, where she examined as carefully the stones of the inlaid hearth.

"How simple it is," Billy heard her whisper to herself. "Here are the stones, just as marked on the paper. But, who would have guessed it?"

Stepping back to the table she looked at the paper once more, and Billy saw her nod her head approvingly.

"I have it right," she said, exultingly. Now, for the treasure!"

Billy could have reached out and taken the paper from the table with ease, but he had no use for it and he did not want to alarm the young woman, as she certainly would be to find it missing.

Irene looked once more at the stones of the hearth, and selecting two of them, put her heels upon them and pressed upon one.

There was a click, and the secret drawer flew open over her head!

She clasped her hands, almost beside herself with delight.

"Mine! Mine!" she cried in whisper.

Seizing a chair, she sprang upon it and eagerly looked into the drawer, when instantly she gave a great start and almost reeled from her footing.

"Gone!" Billy heard her gasp.

She looked again, felt in with her hand to

make doubly sure, and at last got down from the chair and leaned against the table for support. Her disappointment was almost greater than she could bear.

"Ermina has already found it, the deceitful thing!" she hissed. "I'll rob her of it, if I have to remain here a month to do it! She shall not have it! She has no more right to it than have I. I'll have the secret out of her, one way or another, before ever I leave here."

Her face was pale, her lips compressed, and her eyes flashed with the fire of determination. Closing the drawer, she put out the light and went away.

It was now Broadway Billy's turn.

Coming forth from his hiding-place, he listened at the door to make sure that Irene had returned to her room.

Waiting until there could scarcely be any doubt on that score, he in turn made a light and opened the secret drawer, and that done, wrote something on a piece of paper and put it in it.

Closing the drawer, then, he turned off the light and prepared to leave the house.

His work there was done.

In the mean time Harry had followed Lawyer Lyddon home, and knowing that trail was ended for the night, returned to assist Silent Seth.

He found Seth watching the house; and a policeman watching Seth somewhat suspiciously and the Silent Shadower had as yet found no opportunity for attempting the rescue of the prisoner.

"I see no way for it, Harry," he said, "but to take that policeman into our confidence, tell him who we are, what is the matter, and what we are here for. If we try to get into the house we may get into trouble instead, for he won't believe us, maybe, and it will only mean delay."

Accordingly they acted upon that suggestion, and when they had satisfied the officer he was nothing loth to lend them assistance.

In one of the empty rooms, bound and gagged and utterly helpless, Norman Sherwin was found, and was speedily released.

He supported the story the boys had told, which now scarcely needed further proof, and Sherwin and the boys set out at once for the Penrose mansion, the policeman regretting that he could not leave his beat to go with them.

There they were just in time to meet Billy as he came forth from the house, and notes were quickly exchanged.

"Go in and finish out the night there," Billy finally directed Sherwin, "and be particular to have an eye upon Miss Merrett if she goes to prowling around before morning. I will be there early enough to prevent any further deception after that."

So Sherwin entered the house by the basement door and took up his place in the dining-room, while Billy and his beagles went around to get their little Trump before going home.

At an early hour next morning Billy was on hand at the Penrose residence, while Harry and Seth were doing messenger duty to bring the interested ones there at an hour appointed.

Ticket, the Trump, was loitering near the house, dirty and ragged and with his box on his shoulder.

Lawyer Lyddon was one of the first to arrive, and the others were principally persons whose names have not been mentioned in our story, but who none the less had an interest in the matter.

At the appointed time, Billy rose in the reception-room and said:

"Let us now repair to the dining-room below, ladies and gentlemen, where we will all together proceed to investigate a certain matter. Washington Jackson Snipe, you lead the way."

The colored footman obeyed, and all were soon gathered in the dining-room.

Paul Lyddon and Irene had held a whispered conversation, and were probably the most deeply interested couple there.

"I have discovered the hiding-place mentioned by Patience Penrose in her will," Billy now announced, "and I wanted to have you all here to witness the opening of it, so that all might see just what it contains. I will now open a secret drawer, and to you, Miss Merrett, as mistress of the house, is due the honor of taking out whatever it may contain."

No one noticed that Harry and Seth were each at a door, and that a ragged bootblack was present in an out-of-the-way corner.

Billy placed his heels upon the right stones in the hearth and pressed, and with a click the secret drawer flew open, everybody uttering exclamations of greatest surprise, commenting rapidly upon the wonderful secret which nobody could possibly have guessed.

"Now, Miss Merrett," Billy invited, turning to her, "please do us the favor to bring out the treasure."

Slightly pale, Ermina stepped upon a chair and put in her hand.

"Why, there is nothing here!" she exclaimed in surprise.

"Nothing?" Billy calmly asked.

She felt again and brought forth a piece of paper, which she glanced at and eagerly read, and as she did so her face assumed the hue of death, almost.

Billy stepped quickly forward and caught the paper out of her hand, when, springing down the young woman ran toward the door leading into the hall, but her way was blocked by the imperturbable Silent Seth.

"No one can leave this room yet!" he quietly informed her.

He had locked the door and the key was in his pocket, and though the young woman declared that she was ill and must retire, he was firm.

"Here is a revelation," Broadway Billy was saying to the astonished company. "Lawyer Lyddon, I will ask you to read it aloud, if you please. On second thought, though, maybe I had better read it myself. Please attend:

"TO ALL CONCERNED:—

"The tin box containing the money will be found in Ermina Merrett's trunk in her room. Those who would have stolen it have all been baffled. Paul Lyddon's schemes have come to naught, and the searching done by Betsy Bennet and Irene Athorne was in vain. Norman Sherwin, secure your money and then deal with these conspirators as you please, mercifully or otherwise.

"SPIRIT OF PATIENCE PENROSE."

Consternation was plainly stamped upon every face.

"Guess I'll be goin', ge'm'n," said Washington Jackson Snipe, moving anxiously toward a door. "I think I done heard some one ring de bell."

"You'll stay right here!" ordered Happy Harry, leveling a weapon at him. "I guess you can tell us something if you want to—or whether you want to or not, don't you think so, boss?"

It is not necessary to dwell further upon details. It was shown that the darky had been gotten into the employ of Miss Merrett by Lyddon, and that he was the person who had admitted Lyddon into the house on the night Billy encountered him there. Miss Merrett's trunk was carried down to the dining-room and opened, and, true enough, there was the tin box with its treasure, lacking the amount she had spent out of it. Billy left it with Sherwin to say what should be done with the guilty ones, but, as he generously decided that their disappointment was punishment enough, all were allowed to go free. Needless to say, they were glad to avail themselves of his offer. And so the great struggle for the fortune came to an end, the rightful heir in possession.

Sherwin insisted upon Broadway Billy's taking the percentage he had promised, and Billy immediately shared it generously with his three able aides. Nor was that all, for he gave them all the praise that was their due. Then turning to Ticket last of all, he said:

"Ticket, my Trump, you are just such a chap as I aimed to be when about your age, only more so. If you will give me your promise regarding certain things, I will confer a distinction upon you which no other boy in this whole city of New York can lay claim to."

"What's the things?" Ticket wonderingly asked.

"Pledge me your word that you will never swear, smoke or drink, nor lie nor steal; but, on the contrary, that you will ever be upright and honest, and first, last and all the time on the side of justice and right."

"Jupety Jupel! That's nothin' to promise, boss; made my mind up to all them things long ago when I uster read that you didn't never like nothin' of that kind. I'm with ye on that line, boss, till I shed my last button, and don't ye forget it! Now, what are ye goin' ter do with me?"

"I'll show you," producing a pair of handcuffs and a revolver at the same time and holding them over his head to the amazement of the little Arab and greatly to the wonder of Happy Harry and Silent Seth as well. "Ticket, my Trump, here in the presence of these witnesses I dub you BROADWAY BILLY, JUNIOR. See to it that you preserve the name as spotless as you receive it."

THE END.

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